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Marketing Seventh-day Adventist Higher Education : College-Choice Motivators and Barriers

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Andrews University

ABSTRACT

MARKETING SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST HIGHER EDUCATION:

COLLEGE-CHOICE MOTIVATORS AND BARRIERS

by

Vinita Sauder

Chair: Loretta B. Johns

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

School of Education

Title: MARKETING SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST HIGHER EDUCATION: COLLEGE-CHOICE MOTIVATORS AND BARRIERS

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Name and degree of faculty chair: Loretta B. Johns, Ph.D.

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Purpose

Approximately 75% of Seventh-day Adventist college-bound youth do not attend the church's 15 colleges in North America. This study explored the views of Adventist college-bound participants regarding the factors (motivators and barriers) that influence college choice.

Method

Utilizing a mixed methods approach, qualitative and quantitative data were collected in a sequential two-phase design. Insights from focus groups conducted in Los Angeles and Nashville guided the development of a nationwide telephone survey of college-bound Adventists. Three groups sorted by type of high school were identified

from a sample size of 226 and compared in terms of awareness and college-choice motivators and barriers using chi-square, standard residuals, and perceptual maps.

Results

Students not attending Adventist academies lack awareness of Adventist colleges, report little to no recruiting contact, and report academic program and closeness to home as important motivators for college choice. A spiritual environment is an important motivator for students headed toward Adventist colleges, irrespective of type of high school. Barriers include lack of knowledge and cost. Churches and pastors are identified as best sources of information for the Adventist public high-school student. Three key marketing messages influenced all groups.

Conclusions

For the future stability of the Adventist higher education system and to increase the likelihood of enrollment, it is important to raise awareness levels among Adventist youth not attending Adventist academies. The Seventh-day Adventist Church should partner with the colleges to increase contacts and awareness to this group using the motivators and key messages identified. A strategic marketing plan should be developed that includes, at minimum, (a) a branded, coordinated systems approach to promoting the 15 colleges, (b) the colleges actively recruiting at the local church level, (c) an e-mail, mail, web, and call campaign directed toward non-academy students, and (d) the development of resources and information for churches and pastors.

Andrews University

School of Education

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A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

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Date approved

Dedicated to Adventist college-bound youth.
May their college experiences lead to academic success,
fulfilling careers, and rewarding futures serving
their communities and churches as Christian leaders.

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marketing initiative has flourished from the collaboration of the Adventist colleges in the North American Division.

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To those serving and ministering in various roles in Adventist colleges, I pray that this research will be of help in expanding the reach and voice of Adventist higher education.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Although the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) denomination operates 15 colleges and universities in North America (14 campuses and 1 distance education university) with a combined undergraduate and graduate enrollment in 2006 of 24,109 students (Archives and Statistics, 2006), only a quarter of college-bound Adventists attend these institutions. Seventy-five percent of college-bound Adventists attend public institutions or other private colleges (General Conference Commission on Higher Education [GCCHE], 2005).

Adventist young people comprise approximately 67.8% of the total enrollment of the North American Division (NAD) colleges, a definite majority (Archives and Statistics, 2006). However, the percentage of Adventists enrolled at each institution varies greatly, from 94.4% at Union College in Nebraska, to 71.7% at Walla Walla College in Washington, to 9.5% at Kettering College of Medical Arts in Ohio (Table 1).

While the total enrollment of the NAD Adventist colleges has been steadily rising over the last decade, from 20,334 students in 1996 to 24,109 students in 2006 (18.6% growth over 10 years), the percentage of Adventist students enrolled has declined in that same time period, from 72.7% in 1996 to 67.8% in 2006 (Archives and Statistics, 1996-2006). In addition, overall enrollment growth varies markedly among the colleges.

Table 1

NAD Colleges: Percentage of SDA Enrollment

Institution (NAD)	1996 SDA Enrollment	1996 Total Enrollment	1996 SDA % Enrollment	2006 SDA Enrollment	2006 Total Enrollment	2006 SDA % Enrollment
Andrews University	2,354	3,133	75.1	2,817	3,195	88.2
Atlantic Union College	580	711	81.6	407	572	71.2
Canadian University College	315	347	90.8	340	372	91.4
Columbia Union College	620	1,172	52.9	522	1,092	47.8
Florida Hospital College of Health Sciences	99	327	30.3	301	2,086	14.4
Griggs University	—	980	—	—	468	—
Kettering College of Medical Arts	—	549	—	78	821	9.5
La Sierra University	1,173	1,607	73.0	1,333	1,896	70.3
Loma Linda University	1,685	3,327	50.7	1,827	3,972	46.0
Oakwood College	1,357	1,666	81.5	1,465	1,771	82.7
Pacific Union College	1,326	1,544	85.9	1,148	1,493	76.9
Southern Adventist University	1,493	1,625	90.9	2,423	2,593	93.4

Table 1—*Continued.*

Institution (NAD)	1996 SDA Enrollment	1996 Total Enrollment	1996 SDA % Enrollment	2006 SDA Enrollment	2006 Total Enrollment	2006 SDA % Enrollment
Southwestern Adventist University	880	1,030	85.4	—	920	—
Union College	519	553	93.9	927	982	94.4
Walla Walla College	1,405	1,763	79.7	1,345	1,876	71.7
Totals		20,334			24,109	
Adjusted Totals*	12,926	17,775	72.7	14,855	21,900	67.8

Note. Includes undergraduate students, graduate students, adult completion programs, and online students. Students self-report their church membership. Adapted from "Annual Statistical Report," by Archives and Statistics, 1996, 2006, retrieved January 8, 2008, from http://www.adventistarchives.org.
*The adjusted totals account only for 12 of the colleges. Colleges that did not report SDA enrollments for either 1996 or 2006 (indicated with dashes) were omitted for the adjusted calculation, so that the percentages are consistent across the decade.

A General Conference Commission on Higher Education (GCCHE) was appointed in 2000 at the church's Annual Council and charged with recommending strategies to strengthen the unity, integrity, and financial viability of the Adventist system of higher education and to develop a global plan for consolidation and growth (Netteburg, 2001). However, after the Commission conducted surveys, studied the literature, and examined the enrollment and staffing statistics for each of the more than 100 Adventist colleges worldwide, concerns were raised about the declining percentages of Adventists enrolled and a possible drift toward secularization in Adventist higher education. The

declining percentage of Adventists enrolled is less pronounced in the NAD as compared to the colleges in the other world divisions, however, and is reported to stem from the growth in online and evening adult degree completion programs, which attract non-Adventists. The GCCHE issued three reports: in 2003, 2004, and 2005.

According to the GCCHE (2005), the leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church desire to enroll as many qualified Adventist young people in its colleges as possible in order to continue the tradition of training future church leaders. "The church looks to Seventh-day Adventist higher education for its next generation of leaders," reads the *Final Report of the General Conference Commission on Higher Education* (GCCHE, 2005, p. 3). The report continues:

> With the increased number of baptisms worldwide there has been an increased emphasis on how best to develop leaders for the growing church, with the attendant recognition of the need to develop schools that assist in this process. Schools have developed at all levels, but the area of concern regarding the most immediate future leadership of the church has centered on higher education. (p. 3)

In addition to concerns about the declining percentages of Adventists enrolling, the GCCHE (2005) report mentions related challenges:

> Critical challenges remain to Seventh-day Adventist higher education that, if ignored, will compromise the core reason for our education ministry. Among these are the following: The risk of institutions sliding into secularism, due particularly to rapidly changing institutional demographics (increased percentages of non-SDA faculty and students), and perceived financial exigency. (p. 8)

To encourage more Seventh-day Adventist youth to enroll and to increase the number of Adventist students in the colleges, the GCCHE (2005) recommends that the church develop marketing and financial incentive strategies.

> The church needs to take a serious look at how best to finance higher education and how best to reverse the trend of large numbers of church youth choosing non-Adventist institutions for their higher education needs as opposed to our own institutions. (p. 9)

Adventist Academies—The College Feeder School Decline

The North American Adventist colleges recruit heavily from the denomination's *feeder schools*, a network of 116 secondary schools (Archives and Statistics, 2006) known as academies. However, while the total enrollment for the North American colleges has increased steadily in the last 20 years, the enrollment at Adventist academies has not followed that same trend, as reflected in Figure 1 (North American Division [NAD] Office of Education, 1986-2006; Archives and Statistics, 1986-2006). According to the NAD Department of Education, academy enrollments totaled 17,565 in 1986. In 2006, enrollments totaled 15,208, a loss of 13.4% over two decades (NAD Office of Education, 1986-2006).

The NAD colleges have traditionally devoted the majority of their marketing resources to recruiting on these academy campuses multiple times a year. An annual

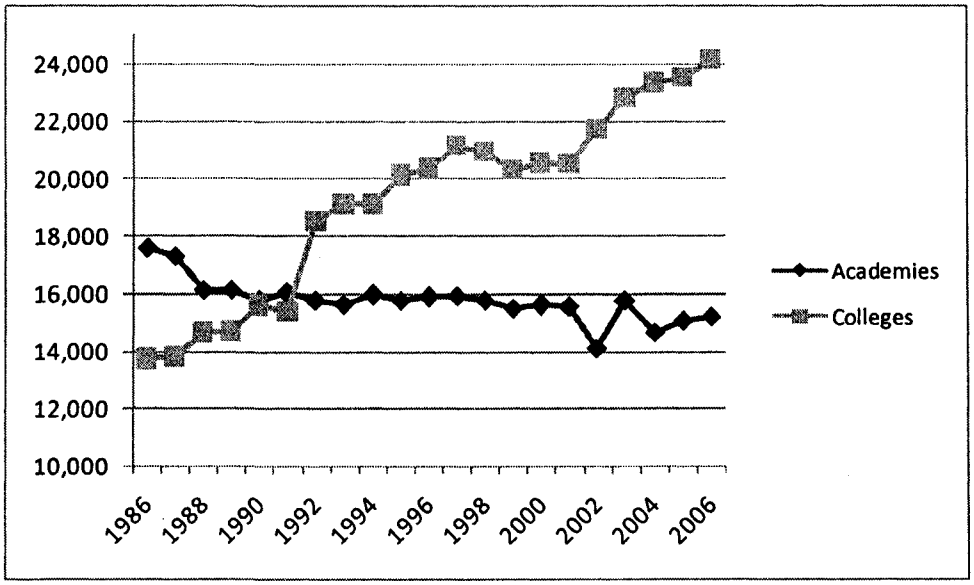


Figure 1. NAD academy and college enrollments, 1986-2006. From *Annual Statistical Report*, by Archives and Statistics, 1986-2006, retrieved January 8, 2008, from http://www.adventistarchives.org; and *Annual Report*, by North American Division Office of Education, 1986-2006, Silver Spring, MD: Author.

College Fair circuit was established in 1999 that includes each academy in North America. The colleges have saturated this college-bound academy market, according to enrollment managers. They have identified and communicated with all academy students in North America and visit these academy campuses often (Marketing Task Force, 2004).

To summarize, not only are the Adventist youth attending Adventist colleges in smaller percentages; they are also attending the feeder academies in smaller numbers. Thus the job of the North American Adventist college enrollment office becomes ever more difficult as the majority of Adventist youth are enrolled outside the denominational system of church schools.

Challenges of Recruiting Non-Academy Students

The Adventist academies are losing enrollment at the same time that membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America has increased to over 1 million members (Archives and Statistics, 1986-2006), another indication that more and more Adventist youth are choosing to attend public high schools, other private secondary schools, or home schools instead of the academies.

In addition, the greatest membership growth appears to be taking place among first-generation immigrants (Bull & Lockhart, 2007), with the largest growth coming from Hispanics. As a case in point, Pacific Union College president Richard Osborn (2007) reports that Hispanics, who account for 20% of the Pacific Union membership, comprised 35% of the new members in 2005. There may be enrollment challenges for this ethnic group, in consideration of the income levels of many Hispanic immigrant families and the large number of Hispanics who cannot access federal financial aid opportunities.

However, there are no demographic data produced by the church that indicate how the membership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America breaks out in terms of age groups, so it is unknown how many Adventists in North America are youth. The Center for Creative Ministry, a private resource center recognized by the Adventist Church, published a report in its November 1, 2006, *INNOVATIONewsletter* regarding the "graying" of Adventism (Richardson, 2006). The median age for the Adventist community in North America, including unbaptized children in church families, is 58, while the median age for the general public is 36 in the United States and 37 in Canada. The source of the Adventist median age comes from a forthcoming study by Dr. Ron Lawson, a professor of sociology at the City University of New York, who has published a number of articles in academic journals about the sociology and demographics of the Adventist Church. In addition, the newsletter also reported that more than 1,000 local churches in the NAD have no children or teens at all. "Fewer and fewer congregations have enough teens, young adults, or even young couples to provide the critical mass necessary to conduct a youth group and other activities that have always been the lifebeat of Adventist churches" (Richardson, 2006, p. 1).

A demographic study of church youth may be on the horizon. Osborn (2007) reports that Paul Richardson (2006), executive director for the Center for Creative Ministry, has received funding and permission from the NAD to pursue a study on the current number of potential college students who exist among the Adventist population. Osborn (2007) also reports that Monte Sahlin, research consultant and board chair for the Center of Creative Ministry, recently made some extrapolations on the college-bound youth population by generalizing a study he did in the Columbia Union Conference of

Seventh-day Adventists in 2004. By extending this union's data to the entire North American Division, Osborn (2007) reports that Sahlin estimates the following pool of availability for 18- to 22-year-olds in the NAD to be as follows:

1. In 2007 – 43,224 students
2. In 2008 – 53,514 students
3. In 2009 – 56,578 students
4. In 2010 – 56,038 students
5. In 2011 – 55,336 students
6. In 2012 – 54,126 students
7. In 2013 – 51,352 students
8. In 2014 – 50,908 students
9. In 2015 – 53,711 students.

Assuming these numbers are valid, this estimate aligns with the data provided by the GCCHE (2005), as well as the authors of the Valuegenesis and Avance studies (more details on these studies are found in chapter 2), in that more than half, and possibly up to 75%, of college-age Adventist youth are not in the Adventist colleges. Until more comprehensive demographic data are compiled, it is difficult for enrollment managers to know if and where markets of Adventist young people exist, and what marketing strategies are effective.

In addition, since 2003 the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been compiling a central database of its membership, called eAdventist, but this warehouse of data is unavailable to college enrollment offices for use in locating youth contact information (Lamoreaux & Ford, 2005). Therefore, it is difficult for colleges to find or contact

Adventist youth who do not attend an Adventist academy. Visiting every Adventist church in North America would certainly be a daunting task. Surveying church pastors has historically been ineffective since church pastors and staff change frequently, so no thorough, systematic effort to identify the youth in the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been made in recent years.

As the cost to recruit a student climbs at each college, travel budgets to visit each individual church often cannot keep up, and recruiters rely on the telephone, e-mail, and instant messaging in their recruitment arsenals. But if the youth cannot be located, these high-tech methods are of no use. Academy recruiters have similar problems. While the church desires more Adventist youth to enroll in church schools, the church has not provided a centralized, systematic way to give the church schools contact information in order to reach eligible youth.

To recruit more among the churches and locate the youth not attending Adventist schools, many colleges have begun to use a church ministry model of recruitment. This model is a best practice at La Sierra University in Riverside, California. The university employs a recruiter whose job it is to head up student ministry teams that visit area churches each weekend (G. Edelbach, personal communication, January 28, 2006). Other colleges are beginning to follow suit, although to a lesser degree. Union College in Nebraska operates Matchbox Ministries, run by two college students, which sends out 15 to 20 student ministry teams to churches each school year and holds youth rallies each summer (R. Weaver, personal communication, November 13, 2007). La Sierra University, by proximity in California to hundreds of churches within 200 miles, is able to do this quite cost effectively. Other colleges, whose union territories span up to 12

hours in drive-time to get to distant churches, have not been as financially able to send youth teams due to the time and cost.

In addition to the core problem of not having access to a central database within the church that tracks young people, several other compounding factors contribute to the inability of Adventist college recruiters to communicate with the youth who are not attending Adventist academies:

1. Advertising to all SDA families in North America is expensive. The cost is more than $11,000 to place a color back-page ad in the *Adventist World*, the only church periodical that is mailed once each month to most Adventist homes in North America (*Adventist World*, 2006).

2. Colleges are unable to mail a letter to Adventist homes in North America, or a subset of those homes, because the membership address list is not made available by the North American Division.

3. There is no common training for pastors to communicate the totality of Adventist higher education opportunities in their churches. Many pastors are probably themselves not aware of all the options that exist. There is currently no literature produced by the church or the colleges that showcases all of the NAD college options.

The NAD operates a centralized Office of Education to assist the school system, but it has not focused on solving these recruiting barriers. This office allocates most of its $1.5 million budget to the elementary schools and academies for textbook development, curriculum development, marketing materials, research, and technology assistance. A Summit Marketing Seminar is organized every 5 years to assist K-12 schools. Unlike the million-dollar budget for the K-12 work, budget allocation for Adventist higher education

in 2006 was $30,000, used primarily for list purchasing for recruitment, subsidizing AACU events, and subsidizing initiatives such as digital technology development. In addition, about $14,000 is allocated toward travel costs to college board meetings, accreditation visits, and AACU events (G. Kovalski, personal communication, March 14, 2007).

As academy enrollments have slipped, colleges have turned to recruiting in the public school market, thus drawing in more students who are not Adventists. Unlike 30 years ago when the academies fed the colleges sufficiently, the majority of the Adventist college recruitment teams today recruit alongside other Christian colleges in the general public school arena. There are varying opinions regarding recruiting among non-Adventists. It is felt by many campus administrators that a good dose of other faith traditions is healthy and allows for sharpening of thought across campus. Recruiting students of other faiths is also seen as a ministry and an excellent witnessing opportunity. Others extol the virtue of a primarily Adventist campus, for the ability of Adventist young people to find spouses of like faith (Stamats, 2005) and to reduce the possibility of outside doctrinal influences.

Statement of the Problem

An enrollment management challenge exists at the Adventist college and university level. Seventy-five percent of Adventist youth are not attending Adventist colleges and universities (GCCHE, 2005). While the total enrollment of the NAD Adventist college and university system has increased, not all colleges are experiencing growth, and it is the desire of leaders in the church and in the colleges to increase the numbers of SDA youth enrolled.

The SDA Church generates no statistical reports on the demographic breakdown of its youth, how old they are, or where they live, which hinders effective targeting of youth who are not attending an SDA school. Colleges' enrollment offices must do the best they can to target the youth who are not enrolled in the feeder schools, the academies. Several colleges are doing well at this; most are not (G. Edelbach, personal communication, January 28, 2006). Until 2005, no systematic attempt was made to communicate with this market or to communicate the opportunities found in the Adventist higher education system of colleges (Marketing Task Force, 2004).

Church, university, and even the Adventist hospital system leaders wish to attract more Adventists into the college system for multiple reasons, including replenishing church leadership, ensuring a steady supply of lay leaders loyal to the church with Adventist worldviews, being able to hire SDA employees who are mission-minded and ethical, and continuing SDA youth ministry and evangelism efforts during the formative years (R. Osborn, personal communication, 2004). For all these reasons, this study was undertaken.

This study was financed and commissioned by the Association of Adventist Colleges and Universities (AACU). AACU held its first constituency meeting in February 2003 with the presidents, chief academic officers, and chief financial officers present from the 15 Adventist colleges and universities located in the North American Division. AACU is a voluntary network of executives, first chaired by Richard Osborn, former director of the NAD Department of Education. Part of the process at the first AACU constituency meeting was the establishment of collaborative projects. Four major areas of collaboration were identified: strategic enrollment management and marketing,

distance education, young adult job placement/church renewal, and human and financial resource utilization (Association of Adventist Colleges and Universities [AACU], 2003).

I was asked to chair a Marketing Task Force in July 2003 to focus on effective collaboration in marketing Adventist education across the NAD with a focus on the Adventist public high-schooler (R. Osborn, personal communication, July 1, 2003). The task force met several times over the course of the next year and formulated a plan to do research comparing the Adventist public high-schooler with the Adventist academy student. The task force also visualized a joint branding campaign and the creation of a joint website (Marketing Task Force, 2004). AACU voted these ideas in May 2004 and requested a budget be presented to the group (AACU, 2004b). In June 2005, at the annual meeting of the Adventist Enrollment Association, a permanent Joint Marketing Committee was established with representatives from 8 of the 15 NAD colleges (Adventist Enrollment Association [AEA], 2005).

This working committee took bids and interviewed vendors, then recommended Hardwick-Day and Strategic Research Partners to be consultants for the research project. The committee also recommended Target Marketing (later to be merged with Plattform Higher Education) to develop a direct mailing and web campaign. These strategies and consultants were voted by the AACU constituency in February 2005, along with a budget to accomplish the tasks (AACU, 2005). Of the 15 NAD colleges, 14 voted to fund the study. Griggs University, which offers only traditional paper-based distance education courses, chose not to be included in the marketing initiative.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine SDA college-bound participants' views on the motivators and barriers that relate to college choice.

Research Questions

1. By type of secondary school attended, what level of awareness of the NAD colleges is there among SDA youth?

2. By type of secondary school attended, what college attributes are motivators (important influencers) to the SDA young person, and how are the SDA colleges perceived to perform on attributes that are viewed as important?

3. By type of secondary school attended, what are barriers to choosing an SDA college?

4. By type of secondary school attended, what marketing messages resonate with SDA youth?

5. What are the most effective ways to communicate with SDA young people regarding college choice?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is based on the concept of college choice, specifically on D. W. Chapman's model (Figure 2) set forth in 1981, upon which many succeeding college-choice models were built.

Chapman's (1981) model connects "student characteristics" and "external influences" as two main building blocks that contribute to general expectations of college life and to student choice. "Student characteristics" are defined as socio-economic

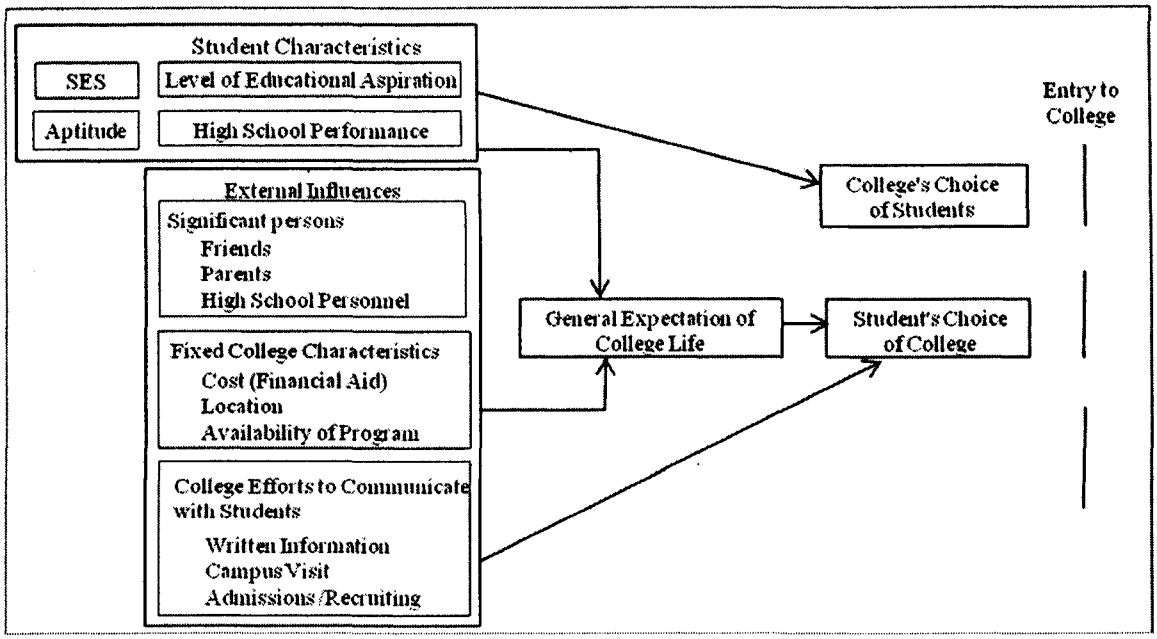


Figure 2. Chapman's conceptual model of college choice. From "A Model of Student College Choice," by D. W. Chapman, 1981, *Journal of Higher Education, 52*(5), 492.

factors, aptitude, level of educational aspiration, and high-school performance. "External influences" are divided into three categories: "significant persons" (friends, parents, and high-school personnel), "fixed college characteristics" (cost, financial aid, location, and availability of program), and "college efforts to communicate with students" (written information, campus visit, admissions, and recruiting).

Even though he published his research results before the Web, Internet, and other modern interactive venues (podcasting, RSS feeds, blogs, YouTube, virtual tours, chats) were invented, Chapman (1981) lists the ways a college can exercise direct influence on a student's choice. This model suggests that obtaining a good understanding of (a) the various influential people (or target markets, including parents and peers), (b) the impact of recruitment methods, and (c) the institutional characteristics important to prospective students, would enable colleges to more strategically position and target their recruiting

and marketing resources. Referencing Philip Kotler's (1975) landmark work on marketing for nonprofit organizations, Chapman (1981) writes:

> Through systematic application of marketing principles, a college can attract students who might otherwise not consider that institution. The marketing approach advocates (1) research on current and prospective students and on the institution's market position, e.g., its standing relative to its competition on such things as program offerings, quality of facilities, and campus ambiance, (2) development of a market plan; and (3) development of new strategies involving both programs and the communication process. (p. 498)

The Chapman (1981) model was chosen over all the other college-choice models as the conceptual framework for the study because this model directly connects the marketing and communication efforts of an institution with the student's ultimate choice of a college. It demonstrates that a college's strategies to communicate with its prospective students are consequential. This study identifies key communication messages for colleges to use to attract the prospective Adventist college-bound student.

In addition, the model shows that characteristics of a college, such as cost, location, and programs, play an important role in college expectations and are meaningful to a student's final college choice. These "external influences" are, in essence, the motivators and barriers, or the influencing factors and attributes that this study seeks to discover concerning three groups of prospective Adventist college-bound students.

College choice as well as additional college-choice models will be further discussed in chapter 2.

Significance of the Study

The results of this study will be useful to church leaders, college administrators, educational administrators in the NAD Office of Education, and to the enrollment management teams of the colleges in North America. The primary significance of the

study is to lay groundwork, in a practical way, to increase the enrollment of Adventist young people in Adventist colleges by identifying and understanding a largely untapped target market that is growing—the non-academy youth. This will provide the church with a tangible way to increase the numbers of Adventists enrolled in their colleges, and thus provide a greater supply of youth to be potential leaders, employees, and active members in the church and its organizations.

The Association of Adventist Colleges and Universities and the Adventist Enrollment Association will use this study to develop specific, actionable marketing strategies to target and recruit Adventist public high-schoolers. Therefore, direct applicability was the guiding principle in the construction of this study.

Limitations of the Study

The following limitations may have a bearing on the outcomes and conclusions of this study:

1. Difficulty in obtaining names of Adventist youth in North America (no church database available) required the purchase of lists from the National Research Center for College University Admissions as well as from ACT and the College Board (SAT). Since the incidence of Adventist youth in the American population is very low and since the self-identification of religious affiliation on these organizations' surveys and tests is optional, the purchased lists did not provide enough names to ensure adequate sample size.

2. Additional names from the inquiry pools of the colleges were added, which could skew the sample in that students may be more aware of the NAD colleges than may be typical.

3. Several colleges, including the historically African-American Oakwood College, did not contribute prospective student lists, and some colleges provided more names than others, thus also possibly producing skew.

To control for these limitations, the study set minimums for categories of secondary school type in order to assure a reasonable sample that can be generalized to the larger population.

Delimitations of the Study

The delimitations of the study are:

1. Only Seventh-day Adventists were selected as participants in both the focus groups and the telephone survey.

2. Only college-bound young people who had just graduated from high school were interviewed and surveyed.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions clarify key terms used in this study:

Academy: Seventh-day Adventist high school offering an educational program to meet the needs of students in Grades 9 through 12 (North American Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists [NAD], 2006-2007).

Adventist: A member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church; short for Seventh-day Adventist.

Adventist Enrollment Association (AEA): Membership consists of the enrollment personnel from the NAD colleges. The executive committee is made up of the enrollment vice presidents and directors from each NAD college (AEA, 2000).

Association of Adventist Academic Administrators (AAAA): Membership consists of the academic administrators at each NAD college, typically the vice president for academic administration and the associate vice president for academic administration (Adventist Association of Academic Administrators [AAAA], 2004a).

Association of Adventist Colleges and Universities (AACU): Formed in 2003, the membership consists of the top three executive officers at each NAD college, including the president, the chief academic officer, and the chief financial officer. The vice president from the NAD Office of Education and the GC Department of Education are also members. The board consists of the presidents of the colleges and the vice president from the NAD Office of Education (AACU, 2004a).

Attribute: An inherent characteristic (*Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*, 2007).

Barrier: Something immaterial that impedes or separates (*Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*, 2007).

Academy/Other College Group: A group of Adventist students who graduated from an Adventist academy and who are planning to attend a public or private college not affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Academy/SDA College Group: A group of Seventh-day Adventist students who graduated from an Adventist academy and who are planning to attend an Adventist college.

Enrollment Management: An integrated, comprehensive, data-driven approach to a variety of core business processes at a college, often including but not limited to admissions, recruitment, financial aid, registrar, market research, strategic pricing, and retention (Helms, 2003).

Feeder Schools: A name applied to schools that provide a significant number of graduates who intend to continue their studies at specific schools (*MSN Encarta World English Dictionary*, 2007), specifically the 116 Adventist secondary schools in North America (Archives and Statistics, 1986-2006).

General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (GC): The organized body of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, with church headquarters located in Maryland, consisting of 13 geographic divisions across the world (NAD, 2006-2007).

Home-schooler: A Seventh-day Adventist student attending a home school. Home-schooling is the practice of teaching one's own children at home (Home School Legal Defense Association, 2007).

Joint Marketing Committee: The group of eight enrollment managers chosen by the Adventist Enrollment Association to manage the joint marketing efforts of the 14 participating NAD colleges through the funding and direction of AACU (Joint Marketing Committee, 2006).

Marketing: An organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders (American Marketing Association, 2007).

Motivator: A positive motivational influence (WordNet, 2007).

Non-Academy/Other College Group: A group of Seventh-day Adventist students who did not graduate from an academy and who are not planning to attend an Adventist college.

Non-Academy/SDA College Group: A group of Seventh-day Adventist students who did not graduate from an academy but who are planning to attend an Adventist college.

Non-Academy Student: A Seventh-day Adventist student who is not attending a Seventh-day Adventist academy and may be attending a public high school, another private high school, or a home school.

Non-Adventist: A person who is not a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

North American Division (NAD): North American Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists is a geographic division of the world church including the geographic territories of the United States, Bermuda, and Canada (NAD, 2006-2007).

North American Division (NAD) Colleges: A group of 15 accredited Adventist colleges located within the North American Division, including Andrews University in Michigan; Atlantic Union College in Massachusetts; Canadian University College in Alberta, Canada; Columbia Union College in Maryland; Florida Hospital College of Health Sciences in Florida; Griggs University in Maryland; Kettering College of Medical Arts in Ohio; La Sierra University in California; Loma Linda University in California; Oakwood College in Alabama; Pacific Union College in California; Southern Adventist University in Tennessee; Southwestern Adventist University in Texas; Union College in Nebraska; and Walla Walla College in Washington (NAD, 2006-2007).

Positioning Statements: A concise statement that describes a distinct value to the customer in relation to competitors, typically part of a marketing communications campaign (Bond, 2007).

Public High-Schooler: A Seventh-day Adventist attending a public high school.

Secularization: Term used to suggest a shift away from the founding church's influence, guidance, and beliefs on a denominational college campus. The term refers to denominationally based colleges and universities of all types, not just Bible colleges (Marsden, 1994).

Seventh-day Adventist (SDA): A member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 has presented the introduction, statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study, conceptual framework, limitations, delimitations, and definitions of terms of the study. Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature and research related to the problem being investigated. The methodology and procedures used to gather data for the study are presented in chapter 3. The results of analyses and findings to emerge from the study are contained in chapter 4. Chapter 5 contains a summary of the study and findings, conclusions drawn from the findings, a discussion, and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

To prepare this literature review, a full electronic search of library resources was conducted that identified nearly 1,000 possible references that related to the key words higher education marketing, college choice, and enrollment management. These were narrowed and further prioritized by review of title, subject area, and abstract to the most relevant and applicable references. ERIC, EBSCO Academic Search Premier, ABI/Inform, JSTOR, and ProQuest Dissertation Abstracts were the most useful. Articles, books, and dissertations that appeared to have some relevance to the study have been reviewed.

In addition, the church's online archives were reviewed for academy and college statistics and articles, and the General Conference Higher Education Commission reports were studied. Books referred to in the Commission's reports were read, as well as other literature concerning faith and learning and the secularization of denominationally founded colleges. College consortium websites were also reviewed for research studies regarding college choice and enrollment management strategies. Conversations and e-mails were exchanged with key personnel at the NAD colleges and in the NAD Department of Education.

The literature review will follow this outline:

1. Review of higher education marketing, branding, and enrollment management literature

2. Review of college-choice literature concerning factors that contribute to or inhibit enrollment

3. Review of literature providing background for church concern about secularization and the dwindling numbers of students from faith traditions

4. Review of the development of the General Conference Commission on Higher Education's findings, and the subsequent press coverage

5. Review of the reaction to the Commission report by Adventist college administrators

6. Review of the educational philosophy of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

7. Review of other studies about Adventist youth and Adventist enrollment on academy or college campuses

8. Review of other studies done by private college consortiums regarding enrollment of students from faith traditions.

Marketing, Branding, and Enrollment Management

According to the American Marketing Association (2007), which hosts a large symposium for the marketing of higher education each year, marketing is "an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders" (p. 1). The American Marketing

Association (2007) publishes the peer-reviewed *Journal of Marketing, Journal of Public Policy and Marketing,* and *Journal of Marketing Research.*

The marketing discipline has historically been housed in close connection with schools of business in most universities, with marketing tracks in MBA programs and an emphasis on sales strategy, marketing research, and marketing management. But the term *marketing* has migrated to the communication and public relations fields as well, with signage on the doors of public relations and communication offices in corporations, as well as colleges, often brandishing the moniker "Marketing Department." Enrollment management offices at many universities also have enrollment personnel, with no specific business training, titled "marketing strategists." The term *marketing* has over time become a popular buzzword and a general, umbrella term that means selling, promotion, and communication.

A true marketing orientation at any organization encompasses much more than mere promotion, however. The marketing mix includes the "four Ps" of product, price, promotion, and place, meaning that marketing is involved with the creation of new programs; helps to set the pricing and discount policies; oversees all promotions, communication, and personal selling activities; and is concerned with how the organization delivers a service or product as well, such as in a university's case, whether the product is delivered online, on campus, or at off-site locations (Kotler & Keller, 2006). A fifth "P" is sometimes added to the marketing mix for an emphasis on people and managing customer relationships with excellent service.

The marketing of higher education evolved as a recognized practice in the literature in the early 1970s (Fram, 1972; Krachenberg, 1972) as a result of the nonprofit

marketing theories of Kotler and Levy (1969), the baby bust, and the closing of about 100 colleges due to declining enrollments (Appel, 1977; Dixon, 2003). Kotler and Levy (1969) suggested that marketing could be used successfully by nonprofit organizations as well as businesses, specifically marketing by hospitals, museums, and colleges. They described marketing as "that function of the organization that can keep in constant touch with the organization's consumers, read their need, develop 'products' that meet these needs, and build a program of communications to express the organization's purposes" (p. 12).

It was at this time that the concept of enrollment management was born (Maguire, 1976), which called for an integrated marketing approach that merged recruiting, admissions, the registrar, retention, and financial aid into one strategic unit (Dixon, 2003). Colleges around the country began reorganizing their administrative structures over the next two decades to facilitate this new philosophy, with a variety of structural models suggested (Hossler, Bean, & Associates, 1990). Several Adventist colleges adopted variations of this best practice over time, including Southern Adventist University, Union College, and La Sierra University, which perhaps could be a factor in these colleges' enrollment growth (see Table 1).

But marketing was not adopted wholeheartedly or readily by colleges, as it was viewed by faculty as a practice that could commercialize and contaminate academia. While Bailey (1980) claimed marketing would cause "a headlong flight from academic rigor" and that it would be disastrous to the nation (p. 110), Litten (1980b) wrote that, on the flip side, academicians were ignorant about the scope of marketing; they equated marketing to crass promotions and advertising similar to what they saw on Madison

Avenue, not realizing that marketing included developing new programs of study, setting the tuition price, and getting the word out about the quality of instruction.

Nothing much has changed today, 25 to 30 years later, with sarcastic professors continuing to sound the alarm about marketing and branding incursions as destroying the original meaning of a university as a community of scholars (Kirp, 2003; Twitchell, 2004). Both authors agree that marketing is necessary and that a smart use of marketing tools can raise enrollments, but Kirp (2003) suggests that marketing has led universities to abandon "the high ground that has given higher education a claim on the public resources of society" and that "a great deal is at stake in this contest between the values of the market and those of the commons" (p. 260). He continues by asking,

> When show-me-the-money accountability becomes the mantra not just of the stock market but of the politicians who oversee universities' budgets, who will underwrite the inquiries that academics pursue in the name of intellectual curiosity, with no hope of a quick return on investment? (p. 261)

The basis of a successful marketing strategy is a marketing plan with a foundation in research and data analysis. The marketing industry is developing dashboards and metrics to increase the return on investment. Topor (1983) described marketing as a cyclical process that begins with research and ends with research to evaluate the outcomes. The literature is filled with calls for research to be done before strategies are determined (Hayes, 2004; Lauer, 2002; Sevier, 2002). In addition to research, statistical analysis and predictive modeling have become a vital part of the modern enrollment management/marketing operation on a college campus (Massa, 2004; Newman, 2002). Instead of cheap salesmanship and a smoke-and-mirrors approach, marketing higher education has become an industry designed to accomplish strategic goals.

A key step in a marketing plan is identifying selected target markets and developing separate marketing strategies for each segment (Lewison & Hawes, 2007; Miller, Lamb, Hoverstad, & Boehm, 1990; Pappas & Shaink, 1994). Market segments are defined by characteristics of groups based on the differences in people, such as demographic, geographic, or psychological differences. The goal of the organization should be to recognize these differences and employ marketing strategies that appeal to each group. Research shows that each market segment may respond differently to institutional characteristics and may need to be reached through different communication devices (Cavanaugh, 2002; Rindfleish, 2003; Thomas, 2004).

Positioning involves developing a market niche or unique competitive strength that is differentiated from other institutions. Imaging is similar, in that you are concerned with the perception in the student's mind of a college, defined by Kotler (1982) as "the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of an object" (p. 57). Maguire and Lay (1981) postulate that image affects student perceptions as information is assimilated in the early stages of college choice. The first step in the development of an image is awareness, which grows and develops into an image through experiences or discussions with others (Huddleston & Kerr, 1982; Wilson, 1975). Institutional image grows over time with each contact with the college, whether through a piece of mail, an advertisement, or a printed piece (Geltzer & Ries, 1976).

Branding has emerged as the newest buzzword in higher education marketing over the last decade, and it is an outgrowth of positioning and institutional imaging (Maguire Associates, n.d.). The American Marketing Association (2007) defines a brand

personality as the psychological nature of a brand as intended by its sellers, even though persons in the marketplace may see the brand otherwise (called *brand image*).

Kirp's (2003) disdainful description of branding speaks of an academic face-lift created by hired image-makers, and Twitchell (2004), in *Branded Nation: The Marketing of Megachurch,, College Inc., and Museumworld,* says it's nothing more than commercial storytelling in a culture of consumption: "Like their colleagues selling soap, university brand managers often show a kind of mindlessness about their task that is inadvertently revealing" (p. 146), and "when you have an interchangeable product, the story becomes necessary fiction" (p. 65).

But those who use marketing and branding to accomplish strategic enrollment goals beg to differ. Successful branding, says John Pulley (2003) in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, allows colleges to stand out from the crowd and creates "buzz," or word-of-mouth marketing. A good brand increases *touch points* with markets so that students and families are very familiar with the brand and recognize the benefits associated with it (Sevier, 2002). "Marketing is your relationship with your customers. A strong brand is a really good relationship" (Pulley, 2003, p. 32).

Review of College-Choice Literature

Studies concerning college enrollment, recruitment, or marketing require a basic understanding of how students choose a college and the factors that influence those decisions (Sevier, 1996). There are numerous influencers on the decision to attend a college, including cost and the perceived benefits associated with attending an institution, such as location, facilities, image, curriculum, and quality (Sevier, 1994, 1996). Because institutions often have limited control over costs and pricing, the communication of the

institution's benefits is critical. Prospective students weigh the benefits against the cost to determine the value of attending a particular college. It is this value that recruitment and marketing efforts showcase (Sevier, 1987, 1988).

There exists a large body of literature on college-choice behavior and the factors that contribute to student enrollment at institutions of higher learning. Studies have investigated the significance of college characteristics, as well as individual student attributes and demographics (such as socio-economic status), parental and peer influence, the availability of financial aid, local and national economic conditions, specific recruitment efforts, and the type of decision-making students use.

Hossler, Braxton, and Coopersmith (1989) define college choice as "a complex, multistage process during which an individual develops aspirations to continue formal education beyond high school, followed later by a decision to attend a specific college, university or institution" (p. 234).

College-Choice Models

The literature is replete with models of college choice, providing conceptualizations of the complicated interplay of factors that lead to student college choice. A selection of prominent models is found in Table 2.

Jackson (1978, 1982) frames college choice as a process of preference, exclusion, and evaluation. D. W. Chapman (1981), whose model provides the conceptual framework for this study, identifies the outside influences (Figure 2) that lead to college choice and begins a discussion about the usefulness of marketing to direct students toward a college. R. G. Chapman (1984) describes five stages of pre-search activities that lead to enrollment. The terms used in Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) three-stage model

Table 2

Prominent College-Choice Models

Author	Date	Model Features
G.A. Jackson	1978, 1982	College choice is a process of preference, exclusion, and evaluation.
D.W. Chapman	1981	Student characteristics, external influences, fixed college characteristics, and college communication efforts affect student expectations and contribute to choice of colleges.
K. Hanson and L. Litton	1982	High-school characteristics, student characteristics, personal attributes, public policy, and environment influence college aspirations, which lead to search and information gathering (affected by media, parents, peers, college actions), which leads to sending an application (affected by college characteristics).
R.G. Chapman	1984	Five stages of pre-search activities lead to enrollment.
D. Hossler and K.S. Gallagher	1987	A three-stage model: predisposition leads to search, which leads to choice.
A.F. Cabrera and S.M. La Nasa	2000	Complex model with interplay of 10 factors, including saliency of potential institution, cost, parental encouragement, and student's aspirations.
S.L. DesJardins, D.A. Ahlburg, and B.P. McCall	2006	The financial aid offer is a significant part of college choice.

of college choice—predisposition, search, and choice—have become very popular in succeeding studies and models. Predisposition is the earliest stage, in which students develop aspirations for college attendance. Hanson and Litten (1982) emphasize the role of college aspirations. In Hossler's (2006; Hossler, Schmit, & Vesper, 1999) work,

search refers to the data collection period in which students gather information about colleges to form a *consideration set* (Hossler et al., 1999, p. 146). The choice stage is the final stage and involves eliminating alternatives from the consideration set. Hemsley-Brown (1999) concludes that although students initially base their choices on predispositions and work within social and cultural frames of reference, students also rely on the marketing information provided by colleges to make their choices.

Cabrera and La Nasa (2000) offer another complex college-choice model showing an interplay of 10 broad categories with subcategories. DesJardins, Ahlburg, and McCall (2006) suggest a model that includes the financial aid offer as a factor in the college-choice decision.

In general, all of the college-choice models demonstrate that college characteristics combine with a multitude of societal and family factors that interact and influence the final set of college impressions and the final college choice. The order that various influences impact the student differs from model to model. The efforts of marketers and recruiters (written information, campus visits, recruiting, timeliness of response) do not always show up as a significant piece of the college-choice equation and are often completely absent. For example, in the Cabrera and La Nasa (2000) model, college recruiting and marketing efforts do not play a significant role. The "availability of information about college" is an element that does not connect directly with final student choice. Instead, this passive element of "available information" is connected by arrows to three (out of 10) other factors—"parental encouragement," "saliency of potential institutions," and "student's educational and occupational aspirations."

It is for this reason that the Chapman (1981) model has been selected as the conceptual framework for this study, due to the assumption that college marketing and communication efforts play a critically important role in the final college-choice process.

Another field of study has been used to investigate the process by which a student chooses a college. *Decision-making* is a cognitive process that leads to the selection of a course of action among alternatives. A brief journey into related literature involving students making decisions regarding college is described here due to its relatedness to what is called college choice. The science of decision-making often involves psychological constructs, decision theory, buyer decision processes, grid analysis, indeterminism, cognitive style, scenario analysis, satisficing, and actuarial studies. Several authors have explored how college students make decisions using this science.

Govan, Patrick, and Yen (2006) point out that the process of choosing a college is highly complicated and requires an understanding of students' decision-making strategies. Govan et al. (2006) studied 20,722 responses from the College Board's Admitted Student Questionnaire Plus from the school year 2003-2004, using the students' self-reported ratings and rankings of college characteristics to examine college decision-making strategies. Five decision-making models were studied, and the findings indicated that the majority of students (74.3%) choose heuristic or less complex decision-making strategies due to limited information and processing capacities.

McDonough (1997) studied college enrollment related to a self-selection process that considers multiple factors to narrow the choice of colleges. Hills (1964) proposed that institutions could predict the enrollment choices of students through actuarial procedures based on standardized test scores and average high-school grades. Hills

discovered that the decision-making process became very difficult when more than three colleges were involved. This study used the probability of academic success to decide which college was the best fit.

Berl, Lewis, and Morrison (1976) assessed students' decision-making strategies based on the relationship with students' ratings of college characteristics. Galotti (1995) described how students generate criteria, weigh the importance of those criteria, and consider the alternatives. Galotti and Kozberg (1996) found that students need assistance in sorting through the volume of available information about colleges. Hamrick and Hossler (1996) discovered that students are either highly diversified searchers or less diversified searchers based on the number of different information-gathering methods used.

The business of identifying which college characteristics sell colleges best is a big business. Enrollment managers use the knowledge of important, positive, and influencing characteristics (also called motivators), as well as the knowledge of barriers (a negative influence or something that impedes), to create marketing strategies that attract students. A brief examination of the studies produced by organizations, institutes, and consulting firms that identify important motivators and barriers is provided.

In a 2002 study on higher education costs sponsored by The Institute for Higher Education Policy, it was determined that undergraduates at private 4-year institutions were more likely to name reputation than location, price, or the influence of others as their reason for choosing a college, and that students at public institutions were more likely to choose location or price than their peers at private colleges (Cunningham, 2002).

The annual Freshmen Survey report by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) at UCLA lists a range of factors that influence college choice and is purchased as a research tool by many institutions to determine why their freshmen chose their institution over others. Factors on the survey include school reputation, size of school, influence of relatives, grants and scholarships offered, tuition cost, influence of high-school counselors, nearness to home, graduates getting good jobs, attraction of college religious affiliation, national rankings, friends attending, and campus safety (Cooperative Institutional Research Program [CIRP], 2006).

Research frequently examines the institutional characteristics that distinguish matriculants from non-matriculants at a particular institution, finding that the factors that most often determine where students decide to enroll are cost, financial aid, programs, location, quality, and social atmosphere (Paulsen, 1990). In these studies, the image and/or reputation of an institution plays a key role in the college selection process. Paulsen (1990) describes a comprehensive study of 3,000 high-school seniors who were asked to examine and then rank by importance a list of 25 institutional characteristics. Among the top responses were the general academic reputation and faculty teaching reputation of the university.

Acker, Hughes, and Fendley (2004) identify two college characteristics that attract students to the University of Alabama—academic reputation and social activities reputation. College-choice factors that follow behind these are a visit to campus, financial assistance, and the desire to attend a school that size. Rocca and Washburn (2005) sought to identify the differences between high school and transfer matriculants on the influence of institutional characteristics in an effort to revise or increase recruitment efforts to boost

enrollment in a College of Agriculture. Both categories of matriculants were influenced most by the academic reputation of the university, opportunities after graduation, prestige of the university, and preparation for employment. Factors with the least influence were campus safety and security, prominence of university athletic teams, and size of classes.

Sevier and Kappler (1997), in a national study conducted by Stamats Communications, revealed the major college-choice characteristics of 3,000 college-bound students, including quality of faculty, availability of specific majors, safety, quality of facilities, scholarships, quality of residential life, cost after financial aid, friendliness, teaching emphasis, academic reputation, and the ability to work part time.

The Board for University Education [BUE] (2004) in the Lutheran Church commissioned a study called "National High School Research" among Lutheran high-school students nationwide regarding what factors are considered important when making a decision to attend a Lutheran college. Important factors were financing an education, proximity to home, location in city or urban area, personal contact by faculty, and faculty who emphasize personal values and ethics. College-choice decisions among Lutherans are being made in the sophomore year of high school. Other important influencers were word-of-mouth recommendations from peers, publicity and promotion, up-to-date website information, and timely responses from a college.

Maguire Associates (2001) conducted an "Attitudinal Study of Prospects, Inquirers, Parents of Inquirers, Non-Matriculants, and Matriculants" among 70 participating institutions in the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities. Barriers to attendance at Christian colleges included concerns about "closed-mindedness" and strict rules. Motivators were the Christian atmosphere, Christian faculty, fellowship with

other Christians, and Christian service opportunities. The study indicated that Christian colleges should contrast their offerings with the shortcomings of public universities, including their large size, secular environments, and lack of ability to pay attention to total student development.

Interest in the study of college motivators and barriers that influence enrollment has not abated in the 10 years covered by this literature review. Enrollment managers rely on the identification of these key influencers to develop the distinctive slogans and messages needed to brand institutions and separate them from similar competitors. Knowing what influences target markets creates efficiencies in the enrollment management process and provides a foundation for strategic marketing planning, all vital to meeting enrollment goals.

Background for Church Angst: How Enrollment Plays a Part in Religious Colleges' Slide Toward Secularization

Since the General Conference Commission on Higher Education (2003, 2005) tied its concerns about declining percentages of Adventist enrollment in the colleges to a possible slide toward secularization, the references quoted in those studies were reviewed.

Reflective of the conversations and discussions over the last 15 years concerning the revitalization of religious higher education, the integration of faith and learning, and the nature of Christian scholarship in the postmodern age are several landmark volumes describing the trend of denominationally founded colleges to stray away from their founding churches over time and become secularized. Books by George Marsden (1994),

James Burtchaell (1998), and Robert Benne (2001) provide provocative analyses of the history of a diverse group of religious colleges.

The three volumes mentioned above, while considered pivotal to discussions of secularization and revitalization of religious colleges, are joined by hundreds of other books, essays, conferences, and think tank presentations on this topic. A good resource to survey the totality of literature on the reassessment and revitalization of religious colleges is found in Dovre's (2002) introduction to *The Future of Religious Colleges*, in which are published the proceedings of the Harvard Conference to the Future of Religious Colleges in October 2000. Scholars and intellectuals have been encouraged and sustained to write, study, and analyze in this field by sponsoring colleges and charitable foundations such as the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Lilly Endowment (Dovre, 2002).

Enrollment issues are key components in the discussion of secularization and revitalization in Marsden's (1994) *The Soul of the American University*, Burtchaell's (1998) *The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from their Christian Churches*, and Benne's (2001) *Quality With Soul.* All make references in their case studies and in their analyses of the many groups of colleges to the important benchmark of the *number or percentage of students enrolled from the founding faith.* When this number or percentage falls, it has been a signal in every case for an institutional drift away from the founding denomination.

Benne (2001) measures a college's *church relatedness* with a matrix using a continuum of factors, with *orthodox* colleges having the majority of students from the sponsoring tradition, *critical mass* colleges having at least 50% of students from the founding faith, *intentionally pluralist* colleges having only a small minority of students

from the faith, and *accidentally pluralist* colleges no longer recording the number of students from the faith. Following this model, a college with less than 50% of students from the faith may eventually trend toward a dominantly secular atmosphere, as well as demonstrate a weakened connection with the founding religious heritage. Benne (2001) sounds a cautious warning for critical-mass schools:

> Since the critical-mass schools invite people into their enterprises who believe that other views of life and reality do in fact surpass the Christian account, these schools run real risks. They risk the chance that those who hold those other views may in fact become the critical mass and depose the Christian account. That has happened in many church-related colleges and universities. They gamble that students may be persuaded that those other views surpass the Christian account and thereby lose their faith in it. That has also happened to many students who have lost their faith while in schools their parents thought would strengthen it. (p. 199)

The 2003 General Conference Commission on Higher Education (GCCHE) study points out the steady increases in non-SDA student enrollment in the Adventist colleges and universities across the globe, which went from less than 18% in 1990 to nearly 32% in 2000, with a projected increase to more than 45% by 2010. The GCCHE rated all SDA colleges worldwide using Benne's (2001) church-relatedness matrix and determined that 21 out of 101 SDA colleges are no longer within the orthodox or critical mass stages. The Commission defined an Adventist college as an orthodox institution if 75% or more of its students were Adventists, and a critical mass institution if 50% or more of its students were Adventist.

"The increasing ratio of non-SDA students is impacting some schools unfavorably," the GCCHE (2003) report states. "While this presents opportunities for evangelizing non-SDA students, the spiritual climate on many campuses is declining as a result of this shift in the make-up of the student bodies" (p. 6).

Burtchaell (1998) illustrates the decline of students from the faith and the subsequent secularization by describing what transpired at Gettysburg College. In the early days of the college's history, most of the students, faculty, and administrators were Lutherans. In time, with an increased regional population and an evolving academic sophistication, more and more non-Lutherans attended the college. The population of Lutheran students declined from 97% in 1923 to 43% in 1952. In 1991 only 10% of the student body was Lutheran. "The dwindling Lutheran enrollment and subsidy . . . were being matched by the marginalization of religious practice and theological inquiry" (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 490).

To identify with their diversifying clientele, the educators spoke of their college as Christian instead of Lutheran. As the college grew in scholarship and resources, more and more non-Lutherans attended, and instead of speaking of their distinctive heritage, educators spoke of character, liberal studies, and free inquiry. Over time, Lutherans became an even lesser component, first of the students, then of the faculty, and then of the administration. "And after a certain level of insignificance, when the 'leaven,' or 'remnant,' was too scant, it no longer mattered much whether the trustees were Lutheran" (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 496). The story of Gettysburg College is one of a gradual disassociation from the founding church.

Marsden (1994) tells the stories of America's leading universities, such as Yale, Princeton, and Harvard, and explains how the influence of religion in their intellectual lives vanished. Each of these universities began as an evangelical Protestant college with required chapels and worships and a strong ministerial training component. Most of them had clergymen-presidents. The enrollment issue appears in each of the stories, with

concerns about waning enrollment of the church constituencies. At Princeton, it was losing its conservative Presbyterian character; in 1980 two-thirds of the students were Presbyterians, but years later that number was down to a little over one-third.

> The simple fact was that once a college expanded its vision to become a university and to serve a broad middle-class constituency, the days were numbered when any substantive denominational tradition could survive. In the cases of Vanderbilt and Syracuse, the less the student body and then the alumni were predominantly Methodist, the less they would stand for Methodist traditions. (Marsden, 1994, p. 287)

Thus, the most noticeable feature about the vast majority of church-related colleges that drift is that fewer and fewer persons of the parent heritage occupy the student body, faculty, administration, and boards of the schools (Benne, 2001). Maintaining a mass of believers is necessary to ensure the continuation of the Christian account at a college. The fewer the students from the tradition, the more irrelevant the denominational mission is to the student body. The non-tradition students "have resisted any appeal to the denominational tradition for ordering the life of the community," says Benne (2001, p. 9).

A striking example from Burtchaell (1998) was the Presbyterian Lafayette College under the heading "As the Students Change, the College Must Change." Students were required to attend Sunday worship, but there was stiff resistance to this because involuntary worship was considered false and abusive, particularly by the students from outside the Presbyterian faith. The president created a college church in 1947, with student deacons and elders and the college chaplain serving as the church pastor. The requirement to attend was lifted, and from then on it was all voluntary. But there was a problem; the pastor and the church administrators were Presbyterian, but over time more and more student worshipers were not. Attendance and membership began to wane as the

numbers of Presbyterian and Protestant students on campus declined. "It was not an easy thing to nurture a congregation within a church and a gospel tradition, under the patronage of a college that registered only a small minority of that church and faith" (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 157). Soon the "guests" began to outnumber and then to swamp the "home team." Because there was no college community available to people it, Lafayette lost the influence of its most powerful religious service on campus.

Benne (2001) compares the philosophies of orthodox schools and critical mass schools, and finds room for both philosophies. For an orthodox school to be viable, there must be an ample number of committed students coming from the churches in a particular faith. And to get the ample number, says Benne (2001), a thriving religious college must maintain a strong connection with the religious heritage of the sponsoring church tradition, and the students need to be receptive and in tune with that tradition.

> I suspect there is room for both philosophies of Christian higher education. There is good reason to believe that college-age persons need a protected shelter for the formation of—perhaps even indoctrination into—the Christian vision and ethos. The world has changed. Youth are no longer shaped by a coherent culture that gives them a firm identity as young people. There are so many competing philosophies of life battering the young that it seems to make sense to use a longer time to prepare them for the struggle ahead. Few of the Calvin or Wheaton graduates seem terribly wounded by their longer time in a Christian incubator. Indeed, there seems to be a good deal of evidence that the incubation has made them more resilient in the face of secular intellectual temptations. Their [orthodox] approach may lead to fewer casualties. Critical-mass schools risk those casualties for an education that they believe is truer to the world in which students are soon to live. They want the intellectual dialogue and conflict to take place under their auspices, not later, when there may be few intellectual allies around. In both of these approaches the possibility exists for fruitful engagement of the comprehensive Christian faith. (p. 200)

The gradual secularization at Wake Forest College in the 1930s included the decline of its Baptist students. At one point in time, as Burtchaell (1998) describes, Baptists numbered two-thirds. In 1941 it went to 58% when men went off to war and

rebounded to 70% in 1946 when the veterans returned. But then a decline ensued, from 62% in 1958, to 44% in 1963, to 25% in 1983, and 18% in 1992. In 1993 there were more Catholics than Baptists in the Wake Forest student body. This has been labeled "the Baptist depletion at Wake Forest" (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 375), which accompanied the serious developing rift between the denomination and the college.

Marsden (1994) describes a familiar American pattern at religious colleges related to the depletion of students from the founding denomination: religion is disestablished along with a shift to chapels and worships on a voluntary basis. Yale required two chapel services daily in mid-19th century—later called *religious coercion* and a belief that "the boys" had to be disciplined. Students were required to attend services on Sunday, and "professors and tutors attempted to enforce strict social discipline" (p. 19). By the end of the century only one chapel service was required, and then it became voluntary. At Harvard, required chapel was also an issue, and in 1886, Harvard dropped the required chapel because voluntarism would "be beneficial to religion" (p. 189).

Marsden (1994) describes the calls for voluntary chapel at many of the private schools, particularly during the mid-1920s, as a response to student assaults. Yale, Amherst, Dartmouth, Vassar, and Williams all yielded to the demands for voluntary worship. In 1925, the Yale student newspaper led a persistent campaign against compulsion and documented student and faculty opposition through polls. Editorials said that religion would be healthier if it were voluntary. Yale bowed to student pressure, and the president affirmed that the university remained in close contiguity with its religious heritage. In later years, the president admitted that there was now a "complete indifference to religion, colored . . . with acrimonious hostility and ignorant contempt"

(p. 7). In 1936, in one of his last baccalaureate services, he called for a moral and spiritual renaissance. Marsden (1994) writes that religion was reduced to vague platitudes and that religious professionals were interested in constructing *a religion of no offense.*

As Burtchaell (1998) describes case study after case study, he portrays the competitive drive to appeal to all students and create this religion of no offense. If a college was founded as a single-gender college, it became co-ed; liberal arts campuses began to offer vocational training and more professional programs; technical schools began to offer general education courses; junior colleges became senior colleges; and colleges became universities with graduate programs.

"The result was paradoxical: the competitive drive to replicate all possible diversity within each campus caused a sharp decline in diversity between them" (Burtchaell, 1998, pp. 822, 823). "To justify it they invoked the need for diversity, thereby depriving their churches of their intellectual ateliers, and depriving the nation of diverse campuses" (p. 833). He describes one of his case studies, Boston College, as a college not acting as a distinctive institution with its own convictions and commitments, but being a "characterless amalgam of diversity . . . Boston College will thus offer its students, not the beat of a different drummer, but the dissonance of a band without a score" (Burtchaell, 1998, p. 849).

Burtchaell (1998) contends that for a religious college to flourish, it needs strong ties to the church, which is of itself a "historically continuous community with its own mind and way of life" (p. 838). The church must appreciate what the colleges do for the church, and the colleges must value the ties to the church constituencies in order for church-connectedness to go forward through the years and keep the faith tradition alive

and healthy. When the church questions a practice or trend on a campus or meddles, Burtchaell (1998) mentions "the snooty resistance by educators" that often takes place, a resistance that is not often manifest when any other governing entity, such as an accreditation agency, a government agency, or a grant agency imposes standards, questions a practice, warns of a trend, or issues a mandate (p. 838).

Marsden (1994), Burtchaell (1998), and Benne (2001) call for nurturing close ties to the church tradition and valuing those constituencies who supply both students from the faith tradition and financial support. The lessons from the past are clear, and Burtchaell (1998) provides a final challenge to his readers: "The failures of the past, so clearly patterned, so foolishly ignored, and so lethally repeated, emerge pretty clearly from these stories," he writes. "Anyone who requires further imagination to recognize and remedy them is not up to the task of trying again, and better" (p. 851).

These three authors detail in vivid accounts what can happen if the administration and board of a denominational college loses sight of the founding principles and mission focus. Woven into each story as a reason for the "slide" and "drift" is the waning demographic of the student and faculty population that adheres to the mission of the founding faith. These case studies provide ample rationale for denominational colleges to work on maintaining a strong base of students, faculty, administration, and board members who believe in the faith traditions and the mission of the institution.

Concerns About Secularization of the Adventist Colleges

The General Conference Commission on Higher Education issued three reports, in 2003, 2004, and 2005, voicing concerns about a possible drift toward secularization and referencing the works of Marsden (1994), Burtchaell (1998), and Benne (2001).

The 2003 report, the first in the series, included a statistical analysis of demographics and survey results from the Adventist colleges around the globe. The Commission was appointed by the Annual Council in 2000 to research the state of the church's colleges and universities across the globe (Netteburg, 2001).

The Commission's Reports

The GCCHE membership consisted of representatives from the 13 world regions, plus two statisticians. According to the Adventist News Network, its purpose was to:

1. Outline the conditions necessary to establish new institutions, or new programs at existing institutions
2. Recommend strategies that will strengthen the unity, integrity, and financial viability of the Adventist system of higher education
3. Develop a global plan for Adventist higher education's consolidation and growth (GCCHE, 2005).

In August 2001 survey forms were sent to the 101 Adventist colleges, universities, and seminaries around the world. The church has more than 1,187,000 students and 59,000 teachers in its schools worldwide (GCCHE, 2003).

The first GCCHE report was presented at the fall Annual Council in 2003, and the headlines that emerged in the Adventist press were negative. "A Sobering Report" was published in the *Adventist Review*. General Conference Education Director C. Garland Dulan was quoted as saying, "With the increasing percentage of non-Adventist teachers and students, we're seeing a creep from being primarily Adventist to moving in a different direction," he stated (Gallagher, 2003, ¶ 3). In addition to lower percentages of Adventist students and teachers, the news report said the Commission found "diminished

emphasis on religious courses for all students, chapel attendance questions, with less emphasis on revivals, mission, and evangelism" (¶ 3).

> Statistics revealed the increasingly non-Adventist aspects of the church's higher education system. The percentage of non-Adventist students rose from 18% in 1990 to 32% in 2000 and was projected to be 45% by 2010. Non-Adventist faculty was just 4% in 1990, but rose to 16% in 2000, and by 2010 was expected to be at 28%. (GCCHE, 2003, pp. 3, 4)

Richard Osborn, Pacific Union College president, was quoted as saying the drift toward secularism would still be a "huge problem even with 100% [Adventist] students and faculty" (Gallagher, 2003, ¶ 11). He expressed concern that the report does not have wider involvement in the constituency. "You cannot create culture change in a top-down approach" (¶ 11).

In another news article released by Adventist News Network in 2003, the opening sentence described the concern that Adventist colleges are moving away from the church's traditional Adventist values. "Take note of indicators which suggest that as a whole our educational institutions and programs are slowly but surely sliding in the direction away from orthodoxy to secularism," said Gerald D. Karst, a general vice president of the world church, who chaired the commission. "Some major issues have surfaced in this report" (Rogers, 2003, ¶ 3).

In April 2003, after the General Conference's Spring Meeting, more news was released. From the Adventist News Network, these questions led the report:

> How many students who are not Adventist does it take to make an Adventist school, college, or university risk losing its Adventist culture? What factors are keeping Adventist youth from attending Adventist schools? Why is it that we are not getting more Adventists into our schools? It's not enough to have almost all Adventist teachers. We need to have Adventist students as well. (Rogers & Kellner, 2003, ¶ 2)

The 2003 GCCHE report relates the relationship between non-SDA student enrollments and operating appropriations.

> Increasing the percentage of non-SDA student enrollment neither significantly reduces an institution's dependence on church appropriations nor significantly increases the percentage of its operating income from tuition and fees. Thus, increasing non-SDA student enrollment in order to improve financial viability does not seem to be working for many institutions. (p. 7)

How should the SDA Church relate to three-fourths of its college-age youth who are studying in non-SDA schools? the Commission report asks (GCCHE, 2003).

Following the October Annual Council in 2005, church press headlines were "Report Finds Adventist Schools Doing Well, But Lists Areas of Concern" (Rowe, 2005). Jan Paulsen, president of the Seventh-day Adventist world church, said, "Our ministers in education [are] the second largest workforce in our church, caring for 1.5 million youth and children. We have a huge commitment to support higher education—as a church we cannot survive without it" (Rowe, 2005, ¶ 6). The report also found Adventist schools to be "essential breeding grounds" for the next generation of church leaders (¶ 6).

According to this news article, the discussion following the report at Annual Council in 2005 was focused on retaining Adventist teachers and students. Dr. Gordon Bietz, president of the Adventist Association for Colleges and Universities in the NAD, said that in North America the Adventist colleges are collaborating to deal with enrollment issues. He reported that about $100,000 was being spent to seek out and then market to Adventists who are not already in Adventist schools. Bietz was referring in part to the funding for the study in this dissertation (Rowe, 2005).

The final summary report of the Commission, with final recommendations, was published in October 2005.

> The area of concern regarding the most immediate future leadership of the church has centered on higher education. . . . Most of the current church leadership has had exposure to the educational program of the church through attendance in one or more of our educational institutions. The church looks to Seventh-day Adventist higher education for its next generation of leaders. (GCCHE, 2005, p. 3)

The report continues with a strong call to action. The church needs to find a solution to attract more Adventists to enroll in Adventist colleges.

> The church needs to take a serious look at how best to finance higher education and how best to reverse the trend of large numbers of church youth choosing non-Adventist institutions for their higher education needs as opposed to our own institutions. The church also needs to determine if there is a direct relationship between the cost of Adventist higher education and church youth choosing non-Adventist institutions for their education needs. It is a paradox that as Adventist youth increasingly choose non-Adventist institutions, non-Adventist youth increasingly choose Adventist institutions despite the costs. This speaks to the need for all levels of church administration—from the pastorate to the General Conference—to address this issue in direct and open dialogue with church educators and finance directors to seek realistic answers to the problem. (p. 9)

The GCCHE recommended that the church should develop "marketing and financial incentive strategies" to increase the number of Adventist students in Adventist colleges (GCCHE, 2005, p. 10).

NAD College Reaction to the Commission Reports

While other denominational colleges in the United States embraced the national discussion and study regarding secularization of faith-based campuses and hosted open campus conversations and forums, the Adventist Church began by appointing a Commission, which included one NAD college president and several educators, and the full discussion was kept within a relatively small circle (GCCHE, 2003). Summaries of the Commission's reports were delivered at executive church meetings and the news

disseminated through the church press. The complete 2003 report, including survey results and extensive table analysis, numbered 484 pages but had limited distribution (G. Dulan, personal communication, July 2006).

The GCCHE summary reports were generally not well-received by the Adventist college administrators and were viewed as "ill conceived" due to several factors: the lengthy surveys that were issued by the GCCHE, the lack of broader input and discussion, and the fact that the North American colleges were lumped in with all of the colleges on other continents, some of which were established as *mission* colleges, which have a greater difficulty attracting SDA faculty and students and often must balance the SDA mission with unusual governmental requirements (G. Bietz, personal communication, July 2006). In addition, the complete report, which included the research analysis and survey results, was not shared with all the NAD college presidents.

The only published article in response to the Commission's reports is found in the magazine *Spectrum* (Pawluk & Williams, 2005), authored jointly by Steve Pawluk, then senior vice president for academic administration at Southern Adventist University, and Don Williams, senior vice president for academics at Florida Hospital College of Health Sciences.

> The third version of the committee's work . . . did not sound as dismissive as its predecessors. But our experiences on two Seventh-day Adventist campuses that are very different in organization and mission lead us to suggest that the future of Adventist higher education may be much more optimistic than indicated in the General Conference reports. (Pawluk & Williams, 2005, p. 54)

The article describes the reaction of those within the North American academic community as concerned regarding the direction and tone of the reports. The reports contain "allegations" and indicate the factors identified by Marsden (1994), Burtchaell

(1998), and Benne (2001) as "purporting" to lead to secularization. "We are concerned that constituents and at least some denominational leaders have appeared to accept this model uncritically," while a factor in the angst over these reports is "a serious lack of opportunity for educators from Adventist colleges and universities to engage with church leadership in the formation of these documents" (Pawluk & Williams, 2005, p. 55).

The *Spectrum* article then switches to whether the students in Adventist colleges are becoming increasingly secular and calls for a Bible-based discussion of what it means to be spiritual in today's world. However, it should be noted that the spirituality of the students who are members of the founding faith tradition does not appear to be one of the factors mentioned in the GCCHE reports, neither was this a concern on Benne's (2001) chart, nor did it figure into any of the concerns of Marsden (1994) or Bertchaell (1998). The secularizing on campuses seemed to occur in spite of a small core of students who were still spiritual and engaged in various mission projects, prayer groups, and worships.

The article asks whether the Commission's concern regarding allegedly declining spirituality at SDA colleges and universities is based on too narrow a definition of spirituality. "Is there not room in the Adventist educational system for more than one blueprint?" (Pawluk & Williams, 2005, p. 51). The authors call for the exercise of "freedom in selecting their students and deciding how they encourage faith development" (p. 59). The conclusion of this article implies that the GCCHE report failed to recognize or support the positive impact of SDA institutions of higher education and overlooked "the wonderful work of the Spirit in our students' lives in Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities in the United States just because their experiences do not fit a particular construct" (p. 59). The "particular construct" was not described.

It appears that the authors of the *Spectrum* article, much like the rest of the NAD educators, were seriously disadvantaged in reflecting on the Commission's work due to lack of access to the full study and a lack of meaningful conversations across the NAD regarding the nature and intent of the Commission's study and subsequent analysis.

A discrepancy was noted in the *Spectrum* article worth mentioning since it relates to percentages of Adventists enrolled—the enrollment percentage of SDAs at Florida Hospital College of Health Sciences is reported in the article at 35%. The church Office of Archives and Statistics reports that in 2004, 21% of students at Florida Hospital College of Health Sciences were Seventh-day Adventist; in 2005, 18% were Seventh-day Adventist (Archives and Statistics, 1986-2006). Which numbers are correct?

At the November 4, 2005, meeting of the Association of Adventist Academic Administrators, chaired by Pawluk (Pawluk & Williams, 2005), the minutes reflect a discussion regarding the final report of the GC Commission. The document is called a *thought document*, and it was noted that the GCCHE recommendations are relevant in some part or parts of the world, but perhaps not in the NAD. There was a request for a discussion of the relevance of each of the recommendations to the NAD higher education situation (AAAA, 2004b).

In February 2007, a Higher Education Conference on Mission, titled "Maintaining Distinctive SDA Higher Education," was hosted by AACU in Orlando, Florida. Dr. Roger Martin delivered a keynote address titled, "Prodigal Sons in an Era of Secularization: Church-Related Colleges Returning to Their Christian and Denominational Roots." At the same conference, Adventist educator and author Dr. George R. Knight (1989, 2001) spoke on "The Missiological Roots of Adventist Higher

Education and the Ongoing Tension Between Adventist Mission and Academic Vision." Dr. Ben McArthur, professor of history, then reviewed Burtchaell's (1998) book, *The Dying of the Light*, and discussed the implications for Adventist colleges (AACU, 2007). A second Higher Education Conference on Mission is scheduled for March 2008.

Thus, a full 7 years after the church appointed the special higher education commission and 4 years after the commission issued its first reports about a possible drift toward secularization, the leaders of the NAD colleges began serious discussions on the topic of mission, vision, and drift.

Targeting Adventist Students—The Educational Philosophy

Bietz described another reason for targeting SDA youth with the joint marketing initiative to boost Adventist enrollment. "The work of redemption and the work of education is one," he said, quoting Adventist author Ellen G. White (1903) from the book *Education.* "It is just prudent to make sure we are offering our own students the opportunity to study at a SDA college. If we know that 75% of them are not attending our institutions, we want to find out why," he said (G. Bietz, personal communication, July 2006).

According to Knight (1989, 2001), the Adventist schools have a conservative function to pass on the legacy of truth and also to provide a protected atmosphere in which the sharing of the legacy can take place in an environment where Christian values are shared with peer groups and through extracurricular activities. The schools are places where youth can learn "without being overwhelmed by the world view of the larger culture. . . . Parents and church members are willing to support such programs financially, because they philosophically recognize that these programs differ from the

cultural milieu of the larger society" (Knight, 1989, p. 234). Knight (1989) additionally describes Adventist schools as staging grounds for revolutionary activism in terms of evangelism and witnessing for God and transforming the world. Edward Sutherland (1952) also writes that the Christian school is a nursery of sorts where reformers graduate on fire with zeal and enthusiasm to take their places as leaders of transformative evangelistic and social campaigns.

White (1903) writes that the schools of the prophets founded by the prophet Samuel in ancient Israel

> were intended to serve as a barrier against wide-spreading corruption, to provide for the mental and spiritual welfare of the youth, and to promote the prosperity of the nation by furnishing it with men [and women] qualified to act in the fear of God as leaders and counselors. (p. 46)

The theme of a barrier against corruption, or a protective cocoon against evil influences, is mentioned by V. Bailey Gillespie (Gillespie, Donahue, Gane, & Boyatt, 2004) as well. Few Adventist academies and elementary schools have the serious type of behavior problems that public schools do in terms of widespread student absenteeism, verbal abuse of teachers, vandalism, and the use of alcohol and drugs. Valuegenesis research demonstrates that only a small minority of students in Adventist elementary schools and high schools are involved in these behaviors. "Public education is not nearly as safe an environment, and the pressure to become involved in these at-risk behaviors is substantial" (Gillespie et al., 2004, p. 83). Statistics from national research, says Gillespie, indicate that "Adventist schools provide clear protective care for young people, just one more very clear reason to support and promote Adventist Christian education" (Gillespie et al., 2004, p. 75).

The published Valuegenesis studies, both version one and the subsequent follow-up study a decade later, measure these behaviors among SDA young people at academies. Does this "safe environment" extend to the SDA college arena? One might assume so, although the Valuegenesis team has only published aggregate research from the academy level. The John Hancock Center for Youth and Family Ministry at the School of Religion at La Sierra University in Riverside, California, however, also offers a "Valuegenesis College and University Short Form" survey for use on Adventist colleges. At least 5 of the 14 colleges in this study use the survey regularly to assess their students. The survey contains 259 questions. At-risk behaviors are surveyed at the college level with this college form, but there has been no published comparison of the aggregate data with national norms to date. If this comparison could be made, it would provide a much-needed value statement about the values and benefits of attending an SDA college.

The ideal educational outcomes for Adventist colleges are found in the *General Conference Working Policy*, Section A-10-30: to

> produce graduates who are recognized by the church and society for their academic and spiritual excellence; . . . who help build strong, thriving local congregations; and who will function as salt and light to their communities, both as laypersons and as church employees. (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005-2006, p. 7)

In a companion policy book, the *NAD Working Policy*, Section FH-05-05, objectives for church higher education are outlined. Colleges provide special opportunities for SDA youth and help students develop "ethical, religious, and social values compatible with church philosophy and teachings, values which prepare the graduate for his/her lifework or vocation inside or outside the denominational employ" (NAD, 2005-2006, p. 333). In Section F-05-01, the philosophy of Adventist education is described to engender belief in the basic tenets of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and

the inspired writings of Ellen G. White (1903), both which encourage a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and a desire to share that relationship with others. "Seventh-day Adventist education seeks to nurture thinkers rather than mere reflectors of other's thoughts; loving service rather than selfish ambition; maximum development of one's potential; and an appreciation for all that is beautiful, true, and good" (NAD, 2005-2006, p. 271). This kind of education shares more than just academic knowledge; it encourages a balanced development of the whole person.

Knight (1989, 2001) sees the Christian teacher as a pastor or minister of the gospel and an extension of Christ. Christ was called the "master," which in Greek means "teacher." Knight identifies Christian instructors as agents of salvation. "Teaching young people is not only a ministerial act, but it is one of the most effective forms of ministry. It affects the entire youth population at its most impressionable age" (Knight, 1989, p. 197). Adventists run colleges and schools because "people profit nothing if they gain the whole world, obtain all wisdom, and have a respectable vocation, but lose their souls" (Knight, 1989, p. 238).

Knight (1989, 2001) maintains that the future of Adventist education depends on its ability to maintain its spiritual identity and sense of mission. "Without these distinctive qualities it loses its reason for being" (Knight, 2001, p. 14).

In essence, Knight not only describes the educational philosophy of Adventist education and the ministry of the Adventist teacher, but also confirms the conclusions of Marsden (1994), Burtchaell (1998), and Benne (2001), in that Adventist educators and leaders must focus on the Adventist institution's mission and keep the founding principles alive and well.

Church-Sponsored Youth Studies: Valuegenesis and Avance

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has funded two major studies, Valuegenesis and Avance, concerning the faith, values, and commitments of Adventist youth. Valuegenesis is a census study of youth in Grades 6 through 12 who are enrolled in Seventh-day Adventist schools (Gillespie et al., 2004). Avance is a study of Hispanic Adventists that includes both Hispanic youth and Hispanic adults. Some of the survey questions for the Hispanic youth were questions developed by the Valuegenesis research team (Ramirez-Johnson & Hernandez, 2003).

V. Bailey Gillespie (Gillespie et al., 2004), in *Valuegenesis: Ten Years Later, A Study of Two Generations*, compares the results of Valuegenesis 1 with Valuegenesis 2 and states that the Adventist Church continues to face serious challenges regarding the cost of Adventist education, the demand for quality education, declining percentages of denominational funds for education, and increasing student choice in educational options. Even those who work for Adventist institutions do not always see the significance of having their own children trained in Adventist schools (Gillespie et al., 2004).

"It amazes me why only a little over a third of Seventh-day Adventist parents take advantage of the Christian education our church has and its positive influence over time" (Gillespie et al., 2004, p. 38). "In some conferences our research indicates that as high as 70% of the school-age students attend public education rather than choosing an Adventist Christian school" (Gillespie et al., 2004, p. 37). There are many reasons for this, the authors state, but since the denomination makes such a large financial commitment to education, the authors consider it crucial to work on solutions for the future.

Avance was a study of the Hispanic membership of the SDA Church in North America (comprising 14% of the SDA population) undertaken by the Hispanic Education Advisory Committee and the Education and Multilingual Ministries Departments of the NAD. The study was published in 2003 in the book *Avance, A Vision of a New Mañana* and highlights the connection between the denomination's system of schools and colleges and Hispanic growth and advancement in both the church and society (Ramirez-Johnson & Hernandez, 2003).

Unlike Valuegenesis, which surveyed only youth attending SDA elementary schools and academies, Avance surveyed more than 3,000 church members in 77 churches using a randomly stratified sample based on size and region. The Avance study broadened the pool of youth surveyed to include those attending SDA schools as well as the larger population of Adventist Hispanic youth not attending SDA schools and colleges. A bilingual questionnaire was used, and most of the questionnaires were administered within the church setting as part of a worship service or during a youth meeting. This study placed a good deal of emphasis on college choice.

Authors Ramirez-Johnson and Hernandez (2003) suggest that the NAD, as well as individual unions, be more aggressive in their recruitment of Hispanic Adventist young people to Adventist colleges. Schools and colleges should aim their marketing at the churches where they are likely to reach Hispanic Adventist youth.

For college-age Hispanic Adventists, as many as 61% would select an Adventist school over a public school, if given the choice. Among Hispanic adults, 61% felt it was important for their children to attend an Adventist college. However, the study showed that the majority of Hispanic youth (77%) were enrolled in public schools due to financial

concerns and the perception that Adventist schools are located too far away. Cosmological or social distance may be the issue, rather than geographical distance. This cosmological distance is calculated on a formula that multiplies geographical distance by emotional detachment and sense of belonging (Ramirez-Johnson & Hernandez, 2003).

The Avance study also compared the achievement levels of Hispanics to the amount of college they had experienced. The findings indicate that the first- and second-generation Hispanics are the best market for Adventist higher education. College completion in general declined in the third generation.

The authors recommend that colleges reach out to Hispanic students via their churches since the majority of Adventist Hispanics are attending public schools. "Where should the colleges and universities wanting to reach Hispanic Adventists go? There is only one answer—the local church—since Hispanic youth are not attending Adventist academies" (Ramirez-Johnson & Hernandez, 2003, p. 116).

The authors also give this advice: "Assume that Hispanics are unaware that your institution exists" (Ramirez-Johnson & Hernandez, 2003, p. 113). Of the youth surveyed, 20% were attending college but only 4% were attending an Adventist college or university. Most students currently attending public colleges and universities stated they would prefer to attend an Adventist college. However, awareness levels of individual Adventist colleges were very low. A table showing the level of familiarity with North American colleges and universities, both within their immediate union and within the country in general, lists percentages of awareness for 11 colleges sorted by "low acculturation" Hispanics (those not mainstreamed into American culture) and "high acculturation" Hispanics. All of the Adventist colleges listed in the survey were unknown

to 50% or more of the respondents, with the exception of Andrews University and Loma Linda, institutions that get more publicity at the local church level with annual offering appeals because of their designation as General Conference-sponsored institutions (Ramirez-Johnson & Hernandez, 2003).

The key point from Avance is that Hispanic Adventists are largely untouched by the marketing efforts of Adventist colleges and universities, since many colleges' efforts are primarily focused on students enrolled in SDA schools.

> Not only are church institutions missing an entire population of potential students, but Hispanic Adventist youth are being denied the opportunity for the Christian higher education that can be so valuable both to their temporal and their spiritual well-being. Adventist higher education needs to make the Hispanic community an integral part of its constituency. (Ramirez-Johnson & Hernandez, 2003, p. 115)

In another church-sponsored study, which was smaller and unpublished, the NAD Office of Education commissioned Don Tucker (2005) of DRS Marketing to conduct focus groups and a telephone survey to (a) assess attitudes from SDA parents whose children do not attend Adventist elementary schools or academies, (b) assess strengths and weaknesses of the K-12 school system from superintendents, principals, teachers, parents, and pastors, and (c) determine how best to market K-12 education. Five union conferences participated, with Tucker (2005) himself moderating the focus groups. No observers were allowed. Phone survey results from church families with children not attending SDA schools were combined with general membership surveys of strengths and weaknesses of SDA education.

The top weakness of SDA schools was the leadership or administration of a school, followed by the perception of cost versus value. Top reasons for not attending an SDA school were the distance from home and high cost of tuition. The study's

conclusion recommended launching a 12- to 16-month marketing, advertising, and image/re-branding campaign using one logo and one brand image (Tucker, 2005).

Independent Studies on Adventist Enrollment

Several independent studies have been conducted concerning SDA school or college enrollment, including studies by Bryson (2005), Mainda (2001), Hunt (1996), Dudley (1994), Epperson (1990), Penner (1987), and Minder (1985). Bryson (2005) and Hunt (1996) studied boarding academy enrollment. Penner (1987) suggested that academies use marketing techniques similar to those used by colleges, while Mainda (2001) studied school choice in Grades K-12. Epperson (1990) and Minder (1985) attempted to find values and outcome differences for those who attend SDA K-12 schools; both authors demonstrate that students attending an SDA K-12 school have a higher likelihood of being baptized and/or retaining membership in the SDA Church. Dudley (1994) discovered significant differences in faith depending on attendance by school type.

Factors impacting marketing and enrollment in Adventist boarding academies were identified by Hunt (1996), who surveyed 200 parents of children attending Adventist elementary and middle schools in the Columbia and Southern Unions. Of 13 factors, parents considered a spiritual environment as most important, followed by concerned and caring teachers, safety, and school climate. Parents who decided not to send their children once they were accepted to the school, cited cost and location as reasons.

Dr. Jeanette Bryson's (2005) dissertation, titled "Factors Influencing Enrollment Trends in Seventh-day Adventist Boarding Schools in North America," delves into the

topic of declining academy enrollments at the SDA boarding academies. Because of declining enrollment, some church-operated boarding secondary schools are closing. In Adventist boarding schools where enrollment is growing, factors essential to recruitment and retention were studied to determine what interventions are effective.

Bryson (2005) surveyed academy employees, students, and parents. The perception of eight critical enrollment influencers was investigated: church support, cost, location, facilities, leadership attitudes and effectiveness, campus climate, academics, and mission. The attitudes of the faculty and administrators were found to be the most significant influencers of enrollment stability and growth. Significant differences were discovered between boarding academies with declining enrollments and boarding academies with growing enrollments. The level of church support was also an important satisfaction factor, as well as the distance from home.

Penner (1987) offered marketing approaches used at Adventist colleges for implementation by Adventist academies in order to ward off financial problems and declining enrollments. He surveyed principals of Adventist boarding academies regarding marketing concepts and offered an outline of useful marketing techniques.

A study by Roger Dudley (1994) examined young adults in Adventist and public schools and compared the data with the Valuegenesis sample, finding the faith-maturity scale to be valid and reliable. It was concluded that students in Christian education demonstrated significant advancement in faith maturity over students in public education.

In another study dealing with declining Adventist enrollment, Philip Mainda (2001) addresses the factors influencing school choice among the SDA population in Michigan. His problem statement involved the declining enrollment in Grades K-12 in

Southwest Michigan. He discovered that there was a significant relationship between parental school choice and the parents' perception of spiritual values-based education, the cost, academic program, who influenced school choice, safety in school, and awareness.

However, he found no significant relationship between parental school choice and the parents' perception of social factors and school proximity. Parents with children in SDA schools differed the most with parents of children in public schools in the area of the academic program. But both sets of parents believe in the superiority of the SDA educational system over the public educational system, so "it is imperative that school administrators attempt to fully exploit any given potential to achieve enrollment objectives," Mainda states. "The declining demand for Adventist education is attributed to perceptual decline in its marginal value consequent to perceived improved image of public education as evidenced from the significant differences observed in this study" (Mainda, 2001, p. 210).

A study conducted by Epperson (1990) in the Southeastern United States on the relationship between attending SDA schools and membership in the SDA Church found that students attending SDA schools had a higher probability of becoming a SDA church member. The research also showed that the probability of retaining church membership was increased through school attendance, which in turn increases school attendance through offspring, friends, and additional family members attending.

Minder (1985) conducted a study on the relationship between K-12 attendance and membership in the SDA Church in the Lake Union Conference. He found that attendance at an SDA K-12 school substantially increased the probability of the student being baptized into the SDA church and retaining membership. It was also indicated that

as Adventist students in SDA schools develop high moral standards with positive spiritual lives, their scholastic achievement was enhanced.

The Epperson (1990) and Minder (1985) studies parallel a study by Benson, Donahue, and Erickson (1993), which, although not a study about Adventist schools, concluded that religious training could positively impact religion commitment in the long term and that religious education during high school is more effective than religious education during the primary years. According to Gunnoe and Moore (2002), religious schooling fosters religious commitment by creating religious peer groups of friends for adolescents, which in turn reinforces the parental view of the importance of religion.

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) and Astin (1977, 1993) demonstrate a significant religious decline in religious attitudes, values, and behaviors during the college years with one exception: those students who attend denominationally affiliated colleges. Enrollment in church-related colleges tends to support and strengthen students' existing religious values and behaviors. By contrast, secular institutions exert the strongest negative influence. This study also shows that students are greatly influenced by the values of the faculty where they attend. In addition, changes in religious values during the college years persist into the adult years. Railsback (1994) discovered that 34% of born-again students who attended public colleges reported no longer being born-again at the end of their college career. The religious dropout rate from attending public institutions was as high as 52%.

Lee (2001) identifies the college years as impressionable years when attitudes are susceptible to change, and Willimon (1997) reports an openness during this time of transition from youth to adulthood to explore and experience religion. It is clear that the

college years are a time of questioning, searching, and movement, and a "time of transition from other control to self-control where decisions of faith and religion move from being imposed by parents to a faith that becomes inherent in the individual" (Henderson, 2003, p. 26). Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) indicate that there is evidence of a link between the religious values of the faculty and the tendency among students to change their religious commitments. Where faculty expressed greater commitment to religion, students felt supported in their values and commitment.

Henderson (2003) explored data from 16,000 students and 133 colleges to study the change over time in religious commitment while at college. He reported an overall decline in church attendance, hours per week spent in prayer and meditation, and a self-rating of spirituality. There were 21 Seventh-day Adventist students in his sample, but no Adventist colleges; the Adventist students were attending public or other private institutions. While Episcopal, Buddhist, and Jewish students declined the most in reported religious commitment, the Adventists, Islamics, other Christians, and Baptists increased the most and were considered exceptions. The decline in religious commitment was most notable among students attending state colleges, independent colleges with no religious affiliation, Catholic colleges, and Presbyterian colleges. Among the Adventist students, 25% reported switching to the Catholic faith while in college.

The Epperson (1990) and Minder (1985) studies are still used by Adventist college recruiters and enrollment managers today because they demonstrate a significant value difference for attending an Adventist school (V. Brown, personal communication, January 23, 2007). These studies are now joined by the Avance study, which reports that 66% of Hispanics in Adventist colleges and universities strongly agreed that they were

loyal and would stay loyal to the church, a percentage which is much different from Hispanic students attending a public college. However, there are no significant differences for church loyalty among Hispanic students attending elementary and secondary schools, thought to be the result of parental and home influence (Ramirez-Johnson & Hernandez, 2003).

Despite the findings of these studies, Michael Donahue (Gillespie et al., 2004), who performed the statistical analysis for the Valuegenesis project, says that "studies have failed to find value differences between religious students in church-supported schools and those in secular schools." However, the Valuegenesis project, he admits, did not include a sample of Adventists in public schools, so the study can offer no value comparison (Gillespie et al., 2004, pp. 382, 383).

Donahue's (Gillespie et al., 2004) theory does not seem to hold up in the college realm, as Avance discovered in the Hispanic study and as Hardwick-Day (2005) discovered in studies comparing Lutherans who attended public colleges with those who attended Lutheran colleges. In yet another study, it was found that attending a member institution of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities helps students strengthen their religious commitments (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). These studies all show significant value differences for Christians attending Christian colleges as compared to public colleges and universities.

College Consortium Enrollment Research

The collaborative approach to enrollment research among college groups with denominational identities has precedence. In 2001, the Lutheran Educational Conference of North America (LECNA) initiated a study to determine how their 42 colleges can

more effectively recruit Lutheran students, according to an article titled "Reclaiming Lutheran Students" published in a *Concordia Chronicle* newsletter (BUE, 2004). The research involved comparing Lutheran students who graduated from a Lutheran college with Lutheran students who graduated from a public college or university so that the value of a Lutheran education could be determined. According to "Reclaiming Lutheran Students" (BUE, 2004):

> The results of the study indicated Lutheran students were more involved in their church and community and contributed to the life of their community more than those who attended public institutions. It also indicated the spiritual life of students who attended a Lutheran college or university were more developed and active than those who attended a public institution. . . . The study was significant in that it assisted the Lutheran colleges and universities to focus more intently on recruiting Lutheran students on the basis of their interests and concerns for personal development. (p. 1)

The differences between the two groups of Lutheran graduates in the study were significant and dramatic, and LECNA updated the study in 2005. For example, on the factor "develop moral principles that can guide actions," Lutheran colleges were rated as 77% effective, but public universities were rated at 35%. Ninety-two percent of the Lutheran college graduates indicated they interacted personally with faculty, compared to only 55% of Lutheran graduates of public universities (Hardwick-Day, 2005). The Lutherans used these powerful differences in outcomes to develop strategic messages and to effectively outline the benefits of a Lutheran college education.

LECNA was the first college consortium to conduct comparative alumni research of this type. The findings were so compelling that many other private college groups engaged in similar research, including the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC), the Independent Colleges of Washington, and the National Catholic College Admissions Association ("Making the Case," n.d.).

In 2003, the CIC commissioned a comparative alumni survey from Hardwick-Day, who conducted the Lutheran research. The study, which surveyed alumni of 4-year colleges and universities from graduating classes of 1970 through 1998, was a continuation of studies Hardwick-Day began in 1998 and had conducted for the Lutherans, resulting in a database that contains more than 10,000 alumni interviews. The CIC commissioned a new round of interviews to broaden the representation of the sample. Other consortium groups represented in the database included the Annapolis Group of Liberal Arts Colleges, the Great Lakes College Association, and the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities in 2001, along with the Minnesota Private College Council in 1999, Illinois in 2001, and Indiana in 2003 (Council of Independent Colleges [CIC], n.d.).

An example of the outcomes is found on the Key Messages and Data page of the CIC website. The independent college alumni surveyed are nearly three times as likely as public university graduates to say that their college experience was extremely effective in helping them develop moral principles to guide their actions. These data allow CIC institutions to "make the case" on the effectiveness of private colleges and universities. Organized around six key messages, the data show that independent institutions: are affordable for students and families, provide access and success for diverse students, provide personal attention to students, enable student success, engender alumni satisfaction with education, and involve students and alumni contributing to the public good. These messages are used in recruitment to enroll more students in CIC institutions. Currently 20% of the nation's college students attend private institutions (CIC, n.d.).

Other college consortia enrollment studies also involve the use of coordinated branding campaigns, messaging (or "hallmark themes"), and integrated communications, which are considered "external influences" in Chapman's (1981) college-choice model. An example is the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, with 28 Jesuit colleges collaboratively grouped together, recruiting in part from a feeder school system of 46 Jesuit high schools around the United States. In a *Conversation* magazine article titled, "Developing the Brand Equity of Jesuit Higher Education," author Laczniak (2004) calls for an integrated marketing campaign to increase the impact of the Jesuit higher education network. He asks, "Why has the Jesuit brand of university higher education not been more systematically developed and vigorously promoted? Does the Jesuit nameplate have the potential for superior brand equity?" (2004, p. 3).

The Catholic/Jesuit brand is identified by Laczniak (2004) succinctly:

> A potential platform for meaningful product differentiation in the marketplace of higher education. Together, these elements provide an integrated and powerful philosophy of education that is cosmopolitan in its nature, compelling in its scope, and so different from the mass of higher education that, in strategic terms, Jesuit education represents a sustainable competitive advantage. (p. 4)

He calls for a coordinated Jesuit website that links colleges and provides an umbrella brand equity, coordinated advertising, and coordinated public relations, all to increase the visibility of the Jesuit education brand. The author surveyed his students in classes and found that awareness of the other 27 Jesuit institutions is almost nil.

> Beyond a fairly tight circle of Jesuit loyalists, many Catholic . . . families . . . are unaware that a network of providers delivers precisely the sort of quality education that many look for. Students seeking high-quality, values-based, private education need to be told and sold on the Jesuit brand. (Laczniak, 2004, p. 5)

Maguire Associates (n.d.) produced a study for the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) with 70 participating institutions and multiple audiences, with a

goal of implementing recruitment strategies and messaging themes and recommend-dations. The Council wanted to expand the reach of Christian education to new audiences and needed to understand what families expected from a Christian education, how they perceived Christian colleges, and what value they put on the dimensions of character development and spiritual growth. They used the outcomes to define the brand of Christian colleges and communicated the advantages of values-based college choices (Maguire Associates, n.d.).

The research project, called "Attitudinal Study of Prospects, Inquirers, Parents of Inquirers, Non-Matriculants, and Matriculants," was undertaken in 2000 with the first results presented in January 2001. Findings indicated that the overall visibility and familiarity of Christian colleges is low in the marketplace, and the ability to name Christian institutions or what is distinctive about a Christian education is limited. Overall, the integration of faith and learning was not a developed concept; students focused on rules and regulations when asked about a Christian environment (Maguire Associates, 2001).

The CCCU research identified four hallmark themes, and the executive summary recommends that these themes be "put to work" by the Council to promote the organization as well as each member institution. The themes are academic quality, Christian-centered community, future orientation, and financial investment or the value proposition. "Supporting the hallmark themes should be viewed as providing a pulpit for greater visibility," the report recommends (Maguire Associates, 2001, p. 19). And "in order to put this research to work, the leadership of the Council and all member

institutions must accept the challenge of increasing the coordination of their marketing activities" (Maguire Associates, 2001, p. 23).

The collective action of consortiums of like-minded colleges has great precedent in building enrollment management and marketing strategies. College consortiums have funded serious, broad-scaled studies to recapture a market; to find a common, yet distinguishing brand; to engineer hallmark messages and themes that resonate with audiences; and to find collective outcomes that provide meaning and value in the eyes of prospective students and families. The business of colleges, or the learning industry, is becoming ever more crowded as for-profit ventures join the ivy leagues in the quest to educate a nation. While commercial marketing and branding was once a distrusted field among academicians, current market dynamics force colleges to act with marketing savvy in order to stand out from the competition, be distinctive, communicate with target markets, and create enrollments that meet budgetary demands.

Summary

In summary, this review of the literature indicates the prevalent use of marketing, enrollment management, institutional imaging, and branding as management tools in higher education to meet strategic enrollment goals. The understanding of the college-choice process, as well as decision-making, is important when it comes to the relevance of institutional motivators and barriers that may or may not appeal to prospective students. There are many models of college choice that aid in the understanding of how prospective students weigh a confluence of factors in their college search.

In regard to the declining enrollment of Adventist students in Adventist colleges, the literature also provides a background for church concern about secularization and the

effect of declining faith-based enrollment on the church-relatedness of a college. The reaction of SDA college administrators to the GC Commission on Higher Education gives insight to the extent of the concerns.

There are many philosophical reasons that resonate with Adventists for why Adventist young people should be provided the opportunity to attend a SDA college, and it seems that there are groups of young people, as documented in the Hispanic study Avance, that would actually prefer an SDA college but are not able to attend due to various circumstances. Numerous studies demonstrate that the continuing religious commitment of a college student is best nurtured at a Christian campus, similar to studies of Adventist students at elementary schools and academies who exhibit a higher level of faith maturity than their counterparts at public schools.

Private college consortia often act together to commission research studies to craft marketing strategies and boost enrollment. However, instead of surveying high-school graduates to discover perceptions about motivators and barriers, as this study does, the literature indicates that a growing body of research commissioned by private colleges involves measuring the outcomes of the college experience in relation to the value received. In these cases, college graduates of private colleges are compared with college graduates of public universities. Enrollment managers use these studies to communicate the distinctive outcomes and unique values of a private college education.

The various literature and findings suggest that this study is valid and timely. The SDA church seems poised to welcome ideas on how to reach the SDA public high-schooler and increase the percentage of SDA young people who are attending its

colleges. This study will improve the understanding of the college-choice influencers that affect the Adventist college-bound student.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Overview

This study, which attempts to identify factors that influence Adventist young people to attend Adventist colleges, particularly those not attending Adventist academies, uses a mixed methods approach with both qualitative and quantitative methods in a sequential two-phase design. The study was commissioned by the Association of Adventist Colleges and Universities in 2005, and the data are used by permission.

In Creswell's (2003) paradigms of research methodology, this study falls into the *pragmatism* category, which is problem-centered, oriented toward real-world practice, and pluralistic in that several research methods are legitimate, desired, as well as integrated and not mutually exclusive.

Questions asked in this study include what motivates an SDA young person to consider an SDA college or university and what barriers prevent an SDA young person from considering and enrolling in an SDA college or university. Specifically, is there any difference in what motivates an SDA public high-schooler to attend an SDA college or a public institution, versus what motivates an SDA academy student to attend an SDA college or a public institution? Are there any messages that appeal specifically to SDA public high-schoolers and may generate more interest in SDA higher education among this population?

Research Design

The first phase of the mixed method, sequential research study was a qualitative exploration of the motivators and barriers for non-academy and academy youth through focus groups with students and parents using purposive sampling. The groups were designed to inform phase two of the research, which was the telephone survey. The focus groups allowed for in-depth discussions in small groups representative of the target audience, but they were not meant to be a study in themselves. The focus groups unearthed some of the obstacles that keep prospective students from considering SDA colleges, or cause those who did consider an SDA college or university to eliminate that school from their final set of choices.

The insights discovered from the focus groups shaped the building of the survey instrument for the second phase: the quantitative telephone survey, which was primarily descriptive in nature. For the telephone survey, random sampling was used on a large representative group of students in order to generalize the results to the population.

Setting the Stage for the Consortial Research

After interviewing several companies extensively about conducting research to study SDA college-choice perceptions, the Joint Marketing Committee recommended higher education consultants Jim Day from Hardwick-Day and Kevin Menk from Strategic Resource Partners (SRP) to AACU to assist with the research project, along with a budget. Hardwick-Day and SRP's previous experience included studies for the enrollment association of Lutheran colleges, as well as many market studies for other college consortia groups, including the Council of Independent Colleges.

From the start, the research was visioned as a two-phase process with focus groups to do initial exploring and probing, then a telephone survey as the second phase. The initiative was discussed for 2 days by AACU and voted unanimously in February 2005. As chair of the Joint Marketing Committee and the individual responsible for spearheading this collaboration, I finalized the contract negotiations, outlined the scope of the study with the NAD colleges, and handled all of the organizational details and oversight of the entire project.

Planning Session With 14 Colleges

The first research event was a daylong discovery and planning session with the Executive Committee of the Adventist Enrollment Association and members of the Joint Marketing Committee. Since this was a consortial project among 14 colleges, it was important to secure support of the entire research project and good participation and understanding by all, hence the daylong session. This meeting took place on May 16, 2005, at Andrews University and was facilitated by Jim Day from Hardwick-Day and Kevin Menk from SRP. The agenda for the day included the following topics:

1. Review enrollment situation by AEA representatives.
2. Discuss objectives of the research process regarding SDA public high-school students and academy students.
3. Identify the target populations for the focus groups and for the telephone survey.
4. Identify list sources for the sampling process.
5. Identify messaging and positioning concepts to be tested.
6. Decide cities for focus groups.

7. Assign responsibilities for research steps.
8. Confirm the work plan and schedule the research process.

Populations and Sample

The daylong planning session identified three particular target groups that the AEA was most interested in studying. The groups were defined by type of secondary school the student attended, as well as by type of college chosen:

1. *The Non-Academy/SDA College group*—SDA public high school, home school, or other private high-school graduates who did not attend academy but who are planning to enroll in an SDA college.
2. *The Non-Academy/Other College group*—SDA public high school, home school, or other private high-school graduates who did not attend an academy and are not planning to enroll in an SDA college.
3. *The Academy/SDA College group*—SDA academy graduates planning to enroll in an SDA college.

It was decided that this study would focus on students who were not enrolled in SDA academies, a group not well understood by the enrollment managers. This is the student market that AACU and the college presidents were interested in as well, as it was a market considered to be large, misunderstood, untapped, and laden with potential.

Why weren't the enrollment managers and college administrators more interested in studying the academy market more closely? It was determined that the colleges were already marketing to the SDA academy student in multiple ways, with multiple visits to each academy campus, including an annual joint college fair. It was assumed that academy students had good Adventist support systems and a solid knowledge base of the

Adventist educational options for college. The AACU colleges were already heavily invested in the academy market and so did not want to spend more time and effort on this group for the study. It was unanimously decided to concentrate on the untapped market of non-academy students.

However, the AEA managers decided they needed a control group from the academy students by which we could compare perceptions. The academy students who were headed toward an SDA college would be used as a control group for comparative purposes.

There was a fourth group represented in the student database with 27 respondents, but this group was eliminated from the majority of the data analysis because, for the purpose of this study, this group was considered inconsequential and therefore not pursued. This group was composed of SDA academy graduates who were not planning to attend an SDA college. However, it is noted in chapter 5 that this fourth group may be a group worth studying in future research.

The timeline on this project was tight, because AEA wanted to study seniors who had just graduated from high school in May or June in 2005 and interview them before they went off to college in August. The focus groups were conducted in mid-July 2005, and the phone interviews in early August. At that point during the summer, most graduating seniors have locked in their college choice and are about to head off to the college of their choice, which created the perfect time frame to conduct the research.

Focus Group Population and Sample

Focus group cities were chosen during the May 2005 planning session. Nashville, Tennessee, and Los Angeles, California, were chosen so that both sides of the country

could be represented with different lifestyles, political orientations (conservative/liberal), and ethnic backgrounds. These cities were also picked because a significant Adventist college presence was located within 150 miles.

Eight focus groups were planned in the two cities: two groups for each of the three target groups described above, and two groups containing parents of both academy and non-academy students.

SRP had difficulty booking their preferred focus group facilities in these two cities due to our inability to provide lists up front of SDA youth who were not attending an academy. For the same reasons that it is difficult to recruit to the non-academy group (we don't know who and where they are), it was also difficult to provide extensive lists for the recruiting of participants for the focus groups. The focus group facilities do the calling to book the participants, and if an adequate list cannot be provided, the facility will often not accept the project because they cannot fill the sessions for the client. Both of the preferred facilities asked for a minimum of 100 names per group (400 names total) residing within a 10-mile radius of the facilities. We were unable to deliver that, so SRP booked focus group facilities that were willing to work with our extremely narrowly targeted, low-incidence populations.

Because of the geographic locations, we used purposive sampling based on ZIP codes in our search for participants for the focus groups. Appendix A contains the ZIP code list and the list parameters.

For both the focus groups and for the telephone survey, SRP assembled a database of student names and contact information that eventually contained 20,210 names. The 14 colleges submitted 17,358 names from their databases of senior inquirers, prospects, and

applicants. We purchased an additional 2,752 names of seniors who indicated they were Seventh-day Adventist from the National Research Center for College and University Admissions (NRCCUA), the College Board's SAT Reasoning Test (formerly called Scholastic Assessment Test), and the ACT (formerly called American College Testing) national admissions test.

Strategic Resource Partners sorted the names by the ZIP codes within 50 miles of each focus group location. For the Los Angeles groups, we extended the radius to 100 miles of the facility and also carefully selected session times in order to avoid the rush-hour traffic for the parent groups in the evening. If phone numbers were not provided on the purchased names, SRP appended phone numbers to them through another service that matches phone numbers to addresses. The focus group facilities used a script (Appendix B) developed by SRP to screen the participants.

Seven focus groups were ultimately conducted (Table 3). Three groups, including two student groups and one parent group, were conducted in Nashville on July 18, 2005, at 20/20 Research, Inc. Four groups, including three student groups and one parent group, were conducted in Sherman Oaks (a Los Angeles suburb) on July 20, 2005, at Facts 'n Figures, Inc.

Telephone Survey Population and Sample

Because of the difficulty in obtaining specific lists of the non-academy college-bound SDA seniors, and because the total population of college-bound SDA seniors was unknown, a quota of 200 completed nationwide student interviews was set as a goal. To achieve a good mix of students in the Academy/SDA College group, the Non-Academy/SDA College group, and the Non-Academy/Other College group, it was

Table 3

Focus Group Participants

	Nashville		Los Angeles	
Focus Group	*N*	Group	*N*	Group
Session 1	10	Academy/SDA College (7) & Non-Academy/SDA College (3)	9	Academy/SDA College
Session 2	3	Non-Academy/Other College	4	Non-Academy/SDA College
Session 3			7	Non-Academy/Other College
Session 4	8	Parents	8	Parents
Totals	13 Students 8 Parents		20 Students 8 Parents	

determined that a minimum of 75 students from public high schools and 75 students from academies were needed. It is important to note, however, that these minimums were met naturally, and no artificial measures were taken to increase respondents by group.

SRP used the same database of names and contact information assembled prior to the focus groups, which contained 20,210 students, described in a prior section. The phone numbers were loaded into a computer-assisted telephone interviewing system at a data collection firm hired by SRP. The software contains algorithms for respondent randomization, which automatically dialed households in random order to avoid response bias and geographic or demographic bias. Households were attempted up to six times to obtain a completed interview.

Instrumentation

Focus Group Discussion Guide

For the focus groups, moderator Kevin Menk followed a discussion guide (Appendix C) that was reviewed extensively by SRP, Hardwick-Day, and members of the Joint Marketing Committee before use. The Joint Marketing Committee is composed of seven members at the vice president level who are in charge of marketing and enrollment services at their respective NAD institutions, representing a broad range of experience and knowledge. Through the expert review process, the guide went through three revisions as it was refined and then tested at the first Nashville group. Alterations to the discussion guide were made during the focus groups based on feedback and dialog between the moderator and the enrollment managers observing behind the two-way mirror.

Following the guide, the moderator began discussion with the college selection process, identifying the important criteria they used regarding college choice. Identification of their majors and the colleges of consideration and selection was next, followed by a discussion concerning the role of tuition and the price of college, as well as the role of financial aid and scholarships. The next topic was the impact of the Adventist influence on college choice. Awareness of the NAD colleges was next, followed by a discussion on the positioning and messaging statements (Appendix D) and communication preferences. The positioning statements are messages that the SDA college recruiters and enrollment managers regularly use when talking to students and families. During the May research planning session, AEA attempted to set forth the most

differentiating and compelling positioning statements to test in the focus groups and in the telephone surveys.

Telephone Survey Instrument

The telephone survey (Appendix E) was fully developed after the focus group insights were studied by SRP and by the Joint Marketing Committee. The focus groups unearthed several concerns that were tested on the subsequent survey, such as awareness of the Adventist colleges and questions regarding the students' strength of connection to the Adventist Church.

The phone survey began with a qualifier regarding Adventist membership and college attendance as a freshman in the fall. The survey included the following categories of questions:

1. Identification of college chosen for fall enrollment
2. Demographics (gender and type of secondary school)
3. Identification of important factors in college choice, unaided and aided
4. Identification of expected major
5. Identification of college of first choice and second choice
6. Important criteria scale (very important, somewhat important, not important, do not know)
7. Awareness of SDA colleges, unaided
8. Awareness of SDA colleges, aided
9. Communication preference, unaided
10. Communication preference, aided
11. If have not applied to an SDA college, reasons why

12. If applied, but not attending, reasons why

13. Performance criteria scale for perception of SDA colleges (describes very well, describes somewhat, does not describe, do not know)

14. Positioning statements scale (more interested, no change in interest, less interested, do not know)

15. Types of financial aid received

16. Strength of connection to church (frequency of church attendance, family observance of Sabbath)

17. Demographics (parental level of education, parental college attended, first child in college, parental marital status, total household income, ethnicity)

18. Recruited by SDA college?

The telephone survey instrument was critiqued by experts at Hardwick-Day and at SRP and was then distributed to members of the Joint Marketing Committee for review in several rounds of drafts before the final instrument was approved by the joint college group. The short time frame between the focus group sessions and the telephone survey did not allow for a pilot test. Content validity was established by the expert review process. Both Hardwick-Day and SRP have done extensive surveying of high-school students in the past for other college consortia and were able to draw on their prior experience in the survey instrument design and development for the prospective student market. The Joint Marketing Committee also reviewed the drafts of the instrument, drawing upon their expertise in the fields of recruiting and marketing. The review process allowed for dialog between the Joint Marketing Committee and SRP in order to improve

questions and format and to establish the validity of the survey instrument. Table 4 matches up the research questions with the questions on the survey.

The reliability of the instrument, or the measurement of internal consistency, was established during the data analysis using Cronbach's alpha statistic on question 19. The average Alpha for the eight items, or the eight promotional statements that were tested for their ability to generate interest, is 0.726, so the internal consistency appears satisfactory.

Table 4

Research Questions With Corresponding Survey Questions

Research question	Corresponding survey question
1. By type of secondary school attended, what level of awareness of the NAD colleges is there among SDA youth?	13, 14, 15
2. By type of secondary school attended, what college attributes are motivators (important influencers) to the SDA young person, and how are the SDA colleges perceived to perform on attributes that are viewed as important?	6a, 6b, 10,12, 18
3. By type of secondary school attended, what are barriers to choosing an SDA college?	17a, 17b, 26, 18 (factors ranked "does not describe" and "don't know"), 19 (category marked "less interested")
4. By type of secondary school attended, what marketing messages resonate with SDA youth?	19
5. What are the most effective ways to communicate with SDA young people regarding college choice?	15, 16a, 16b

Data Collection

Focus Group Data Collection

During the focus groups in Nashville and Los Angeles, enrollment managers and counselors from the SDA colleges observed behind two-way mirrors, and the observation rooms were full for all sessions of the focus groups. The moderator excused himself from the groups to visit the observation room several times during each session to ask if we wanted him to ask any additional questions or modify the discussion guide, based on what we were learning.

Video cameras recorded all of the focus group sessions and cassette tapes were made from the audio feed. A research assistant from SRP was in the observation room typing extensive notes from the session on a laptop, recording the gist of each participant comment for each discussion topic. The notes were assembled into an Excel spreadsheet that followed the outline of the focus group guide.

During the focus groups, participants were asked to rate the messaging and positioning statements on a sheet of paper, and those were later tallied by SRP.

Telephone Survey Data Collection

For the telephone survey, the random selection process used by the computer-assisted telephone interviewing software gave each name in the database an equal chance of being selected for a call. Each number was attempted up to six times in order to increase response rate. SRP's call center recorded the responses to the questionnaire instrument into a computer as callers were talking to the participants, so the data were recorded and categorized simultaneously. Each telephone survey was approximately 18

minutes in length, and the interviews were conducted over a 1-week period during the second week in August 2005.

Data Analysis

Focus Group Data Analysis

Since focus group findings cannot be generalized to the population, review of the focus group sessions provided opportunities to analyze insights and gain perspectives from the comments and conversations of the students and parents. The analysis of these groups was done thusly:

1. Two members of the SRP research team (Jessica Westley and Kevin Menk) analyzed the focus group tapes, compiled the positioning statement rankings, and created the Excel spreadsheet of respondent conversations. (No word-by-word transcripts of the sessions were ordered, as the focus group results were not the end-product of this project, but rather an informing step toward building a content-valid telephone survey based on exploratory insights into the target populations being examined.)

2. To provide another assessment of the focus groups, I played and listened to each of the seven focus group videotapes. I reviewed my notes from my observations behind the two-way mirrors at each focus group session. I also reviewed SRP's Excel compilation of the respondents' comments.

3. Three other members of the Joint Marketing Committee received the videotapes and watched portions of the tapes as well.

4. Using the guide as a reference for categories and insights, SRP and the Joint Marketing Committee evaluated each category and determined what was needed to move forward to the phone survey. Topics were deleted, trimmed, expanded, and added.

Added topics included a focus on awareness levels (the extremely low awareness level surprised both the moderator and the enrollment managers), both aided and unaided, and an attempt to determine connectedness to the church, which took the form of a question about church attendance and a question about family Sabbath observance.

From the review of my evaluation of the focus group results, comparing it to the SRP's team evaluation, I determined that there was almost complete agreement and consensus with the key insights culled from the focus group observations. (There were only minor differences in perceptions as to which of the Adventist colleges were being discussed by students when awareness and perceptions of the individual colleges were questioned. This confusion is common between Southern Adventist University and Southwestern Adventist University since the two colleges have such similar names. SRP would occasionally attribute comments about the wrong college.) Although focus groups are very subjective and data points are not necessarily well defined, interscorer reliability was reached by consensus, discussion, and deliberation.

Overall, the analysis of these groups allowed us to shape the telephone survey instrument with a great deal of clarity. The insights and the factors mentioned with great frequency were aligned in the development of the phone survey. College-choice influencers, both motivators and barriers, were adapted from the focus groups and placed in the telephone survey. Awareness levels of the 14 participating NAD colleges were added to the telephone survey instrument, as well as performance levels aligned with the college-choice influencers. Eight recruiting and marketing messages, or position statements, were carried forward to the telephone survey. Of the 10 position statements tested in the focus groups, 2 were dropped from consideration for the telephone survey.

A table of college-choice factors from the focus groups was also compiled (Table 15 in chapter 4). The table is an estimate of the number of mentions of each college-choice factor as a key influencer or barrier by the student respondents during the focus group. This table cannot be generalized to any population and is only supplied as a driver that helped to inform the telephone survey.

Telephone Survey Data Analysis

The telephone survey instrument (Appendix E) is primarily descriptive. The data collected by the call center were entered into Quantum as the callers moved through the computer-assisted survey. Quantum is a large, commercial software program designed for tabulation of marketing research. While SRP used the Quantum output in a series of contingency tables for the reporting of frequencies and percentages for each item of the survey, this study reanalyzed each outcome for each question. SRP's data vendor, Georgia Data Processing, provided a .qsp file that was converted into an SPSS file for this study.

The differences among the three groups of students were compared using crosstabulations and Chi-square, showing frequencies, percentages, standard residuals, degrees of freedom, and *p* values. An absolute standard residual value of 2.0 or greater (Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 2003), combined with an alpha *p* value of less than .05, is used to indicate statistical significance, or a significant difference, between the groups.

Perceptual maps were constructed using an SRP model to visually track the scores from the three groups using the college criteria and college performance scales (see Figures 4, 5, and 6 in chapter 7).

In summary, chapter 3 describes the methodology used for this study, including the research design, population and samples for both the focus groups and the telephone survey, instrumentation, and the data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 provides the results of the study and the findings for the research questions.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from both phase one and phase two of this mixed methods study. Phase one findings are qualitative and result from 33 student participants in five focus groups—two student focus groups in Nashville and three student groups in Los Angeles. Phase two results are quantitative, from the nationwide telephone survey of rising college freshmen who are members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. A total of 253 rising freshmen completed the telephone interview.

Findings for 226 students from the telephone survey are reported with comparisons among the three key groups designated in the study—the Academy/SDA College group, the Non-Academy/SDA College group, and the Non-Academy/Other College group. These groups categorize the rising freshmen according to their secondary school and their college choice, which is of great practical use in determining strategies to target the SDA youth who are not attending Adventist academies.

The organization of the chapter is as follows:

1. General demographic findings for both the focus groups and the telephone survey

2. Findings sorted by research question for both the focus groups and telephone survey.

At each focus group location, the participants were clustered in the three target groups under study (see Table 3 in chapter 3). The focus groups helped identify issues, perceptions, and opportunities to test quantitatively in the subsequent phone survey. Due to the small sample size, the focus group findings cannot be generalized and are interpreted with caution. The focus groups were a valuable planning tool that assisted in the exploration of topics. The subsequent quantitative research obtained representative findings from the three target segments that can be generalized to a larger population.

General Findings

Demographics

Focus Groups

Thirty-three students participated in five focus groups in Nashville and Los Angeles (see Table 3 in chapter 3). In Nashville, two student groups were conducted: The first group of 10 was composed of 7 students from the Academy/SDA College group and 3 from the Non-Academy/SDA College group; the second group of 3 was from the Non-Academy/Other College group.

In Los Angeles, three student groups were conducted: The first group of nine students was from the Academy/SDA College group; the second group of four students was from the Non-Academy/SDA College group; and the third group of seven was from the Non-Academy/Other College group.

A parent focus group was held in Nashville, as well as in Los Angeles. The study is delimited to students; the parent group findings have been eliminated from the analysis.

Telephone Survey

A total of 253 phone interviews were completed with SDA youth who planned to attend college as freshmen in the fall of 2005. Table 5 reports the general demographic findings. Of the respondents, 64.8% were from a non-academy background, and 35.2% were from an Adventist academy, which fulfilled the desire to have at least 75 from each of the two populations. It should be noted, however, that the populations all occurred naturally as the study progressed, and no artificial methods were taken to build a population in each group.

There was good representation from ethnic groups and also from the geographic Census regions. Of the respondents, 43.1% were from the West, which reflects the large prospective databases provided to SRP by the three West Coast colleges. While the ratio of male to female respondents is 39.1% to 60.9%, the ratio corresponds with current trends in higher education; more females are entering college than males (Sax, 2007).

Of the total population of college-bound youth interviewed, 47.4% planned to attend an SDA college. Of the non-academy youth, or those Adventists who did not attend an academy, 35.4% planned to attend an Adventist college. Of the academy students, 30.3% were not planning to attend an Adventist college.

Table 6 shows the demographic result of a crosstab between high-school type and ethnicity. Chi-square analysis and standard residuals demonstrate that, in this study, college-bound Caucasians attended academies at significantly higher proportions than the other ethnicities. In the Caucasian group, 47.2% attended an academy, while 35.8% attended a public high school, 8.5% attended other private schools, and 8.5% attended a home school.

Table 5

Demographic Results for 253 Total Respondents

Variable	*N*	%
Gender		
Male	99	39.1
Female	154	60.9
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	106	41.9
Asian	21	8.3
African American	61	24.1
Hispanic	39	15.4
Native American	1	0.4
Other	23	9.1
Didn't know/refused	2	0.8
Geographic census region		
North Central	46	18.2
Northeast	32	12.6
South	55	21.7
West	109	43.1
Canada	11	4.3
High-school type		
Non-academy	164	64.8
Public high school	135	53.4
Other private high school	20	7.9
Home school	9	3.6
Academy	89	35.2
By group		
Non-academy/other college	106	41.9
Non-academy/SDA college	58	22.9
Academy/SDA college	62	24.5
Academy/other college	27	10.7

Table 6

High-School Type by Ethnicity

High-school type	Caucasian (*N*=106) *N* (%)	African American (*N*=61) *N* (%)	Asian (*N*=21) *N* (%)	Hispanic (*N*=39) *N* (%)	Other (*N*=24) *N* (%)	Don't know/ refused (*N*=2) *N* (%)
Public	38 (35.8)	44 (72.1)	13 (61.9)	22 (56.4)	16 (66.7)	2 (100.0)
Adventist academy	50 (47.2)	14 (23.0)	6 (28.6)	13 (33.3)	6 (25.0)	0 (0.0)
Other private	9 (8.5)	3 (4.9)	2 (9.5)	4 (10.3)	2 (8.3)	0 (0.0)
Home school	9 (8.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

Note. $\chi^2 = 34.94$, $df = 18$, $p = .010$.

African Americans attended public high schools at a significantly higher rate than the other ethnicities; 72.1% of the African Americans in the study attended a public high school and 23.0% of the African Americans attended an academy.

Asians and Hispanics also attended public high schools in larger proportions than academy or other private schools. More than 61% of Asians and 56.4% of Hispanics attended public high schools; 28.6% of Asians and 33.3% of Hispanics attended academies. Of the entire academy population, 56.2% were Caucasian and 43.8% were minorities.

For further data analysis and comparisons of the groups, the Academy/Other College group was then eliminated from the total data set of 253 respondents. This group was not a key group to be examined in the study. The remaining data set containing 226 rising freshmen forms the basis of the findings from this section forward.

Findings From the Data Set of 226 Rising Freshmen

Demographic findings for gender, ethnicity, type of high school, and household income for the 226 rising freshmen are presented in Table 7, based on comparisons of the three remaining groups: Non-Academy/Other College, Non-Academy/SDA College, and Academy/SDA College.

Chi-square analysis indicates no significant difference between groups for gender. In terms of ethnicity, African Americans are attending non-SDA colleges at a significantly higher rate than other ethnicities. Among Hispanics and Asians, there are no significant differences. A significantly higher percentage of Caucasians are headed to Adventist colleges from Adventist academies.

The Non-Academy/SDA College group has a significantly larger base of students who attended a private high school rather than a public high school. Non-academy students who attend a private high school are more likely to attend an Adventist college. Public high-school graduates are attending other private colleges and universities (not Adventist) at a much higher rate than graduates of the other types of high schools. Where a student intends to go to college is clearly related to the type of high school attended.

No significant differences between groups were found in regard to household income. While it is often assumed that the Non-Academy/Other College group may be in a lower income bracket, this study does not find that assumption to be true. However, this data should be interpreted cautiously as one-third to one-half of this group either *did not know* or *refused* to report their household income.

Table 8 consists of comparisons of parent attendance at Adventist colleges among groups, as well as measures of connection to the church. Chi-square analysis

Table 7

Demographic Characteristics by Group

Variable	Non-academy/ other college (*N*=106) *N* (%)	Non-academy/ SDA college (*N*=58) *N* (%)	Academy/ SDA college (*N*=62) *N* (%)
Gender			
Male	42 (46.2)	25 (27.5)	24 (26.4)
Female	64 (47.4)	33 (24.4)	38 (28.1)
$\chi^2 = 0.275$, $df = 2$, $p = .872$			
Ethnicity			
Caucasian	30 (28.3)	26 (44.8)	38 (61.3)
Asian	10 (9.4)	5 (8.6)	4 (6.5)
African American	40 (37.7)	7 (12.1)	7 (11.3)
Hispanic	15 (14.2)	11 (19.0)	8 (12.9)
Other	11 (10.4)	9 (15.5)	5 (8.1)
$\chi^2 = 29.29$, $df = 8$, $p = .000$			
High school			
Public	95 (89.6)	40 (69.0)	0* (0.0)
Academy	0* (0.0)	0* (0.0)	62 (100.0)
Private	6 (5.7)	14 (24.1)	0* (0.0)
Home school	5 (4.7)	4 (6.9)	0* (0.0)
$\chi^2 = 243.59$, $df = 6$, $p = .000$			
Household income			
Less than $50,000	34 (32.1)	14 (24.1)	10 (16.1)
$50,000-$99,000	18 (17.0)	17 (29.3)	18 (29.0)
$100,000 or more	7 (6.6)	7 (12.1)	7 (11.3)
Don't know/refused	47 (44.3)	20 (34.5)	27 (43.5)
$\chi^2 = 10.04$, $df = 6$, $p = .123$			

* These zero findings are artifacts of the group classifications.

Table 8

Additional Characteristics by Group

Variable	Non-Academy/ other college (*N*=106) *N* (%)	Non-academy/ SDA college (*N*=58) *N* (%)	Academy/ SDA college (*N*=62) *N* (%)
Parent attendance at Adventist colleges			
One or both parents attended	11 (10.4)	20 (34.5)	38 (61.3)
Neither parent attended	95 (89.6)	38 (65.5)	24 (38.7)
$\chi^2 = 48.38$, $df = 2$, $p = .000$			
Measure of relationship to church: Times attended in three months			
0-11	36 (34.0)	14 (24.1)	17 (27.4)
12 (once per week)	53 (50.0)	33 (56.9)	37 (59.7)
13+ (more than once per week)	16 (15.1)	9 (15.5)	8 (12.9)
Don't know/refused	1 (0.9)	2 (3.4)	0 (0.0)
$\chi^2 = 5.20$, $df = 6$, $p = .518$			
Measure of relationship to church: family Sabbath observance			
Yes	92 (86.8)	55 (94.8)	60 (96.8)
No	11 (10.4)	2 (3.4)	0 (0.0)
Sometimes/don't know/ refused	3 (2.8)	1 (1.7)	2 (3.2)
$\chi^2 = 8.84$, $df = 4$, $p = .065$			

demonstrates that if a student's parent(s) have attended an SDA college, there is a significantly greater likelihood that the student will attend an SDA college, even if they are not enrolled in an SDA academy. The same relationship holds true for students whose parents did not attend an Adventist college; they are more likely not to attend an Adventist college.

There is a widely held assumption that students not attending Adventist academies are not as connected to the church in terms of beliefs and values. Survey questions regarding Sabbath observance and frequency of church attendance were included to determine a student's relationship to the church, although these are admittedly self-reported behaviors. Table 8 shows that no significant differences were found between groups either in church attendance or Sabbath observance. It is of interest to note, however, that 10% of those in the Non-Academy/Other College group report that their families do not observe the Sabbath. While significance at the alpha level was not shown, it can be argued that this percentage alone might be of practical significance.

College of First Choice

Tables 9 and 10 show the students' first choice of college. Table 9 is an aggregated view and Table 10 provides a descriptive look at the individual Adventist colleges. In the aggregated view, over 80% of students in the Non-Academy/SDA College group indicated that an Adventist college was their first choice, which is not surprising because they are grouped in a category that has chosen to attend SDA colleges, so this finding is artificially inflated due to the group classification. Of note is that 14.2% of the Non-Academy/Other College students also indicated that an Adventist college was their first choice, in spite of the fact that they were about to enroll in a non-Adventist

Table 9

First-Choice College—Aggregated

First-choice college	Non-academy/ other college (*N*=106) *N* (%)	Non-academy/ SDA college (*N*=58) *N* (%)	Academy/ SDA college (*N*=62) *N* (%)
SDA colleges	15 (14.2)	48 (82.8)	55 (88.7)
Other private colleges	13 (12.3)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.6)
Public colleges	48 (45.3)	4 (6.9)	3 (4.8)
Other	7 (6.6)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.6)
Don't know/refused	23 (21.7)	6 (10.3)	2 (3.2)

Note. $\chi^2 = 119.53$, $df = 8$, $p = .000$.

college. The most likely type of college for this group to attend is a public college, with other private colleges coming in behind the SDA colleges as a first choice.

When examining the first-choice data by individual SDA colleges in Table 10, Southern Adventist University, Pacific Union College, and La Sierra University led the first-choice picks, attracting the most students from both the academy and non-academy groups headed toward SDA colleges.

Financial Aid

Focus Groups

The majority of students indicated they were counting on scholarships to help pay for college. Most students would contribute in some way, including earned income, achievement scholarships, and grants. Several students planned to take out loans and apply for need-based aid. Most families had already discussed how they would pay for college.

Table 10

First-Choice College—by Individual College

First-choice college	Non-academy/ other college (*N*=106) *N* (%)	Non-academy/ SDA college (*N*=58) *N* (%)	Academy/ SDA college (*N*=62) *N* (%)	Total *N* (%)
Andrews University	2 (1.9)	5 (8.6)	9 (14.5)	16 (7.1)
Atlantic Union College	0 (0.0)	1 (1.7)	1 (1.6)	2 (0.9)
Columbia Union College	1 (0.9)	1 (1.7)	0 (0.0)	2 (0.9)
Florida Hospital College	0 (0.0)	1 (1.7)	1 (1.6)	2 (0.9)
Kettering College	1 (0.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.4)
La Sierra University	1 (0.9)	10 (17.2)	7 (11.3)	18 (8.0)
Loma Linda University	0 (0.0)	1 (1.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.4)
Oakwood College	2 (1.9)	1 (1.7)	2 (3.2)	5 (2.2)
Pacific Union College	0 (0.0)	9 (15.5)	9 (14.5)	18 (8.0)
Southern Adventist University	2 (1.9)	12 (20.7)	11 (17.7)	25 (11.1)
Union College	5 (4.7)	2 (3.4)	6 (9.7)	13 (5.8)
Walla Walla College	1 (0.9)	5 (8.6)	9 (14.5)	15 (6.6)
Other private	13 (12.3)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.6)	14 (6.2)
Public	48 (45.3)	4 (6.9)	3 (4.8)	55 (24.3)
Don't know/refused	23 (21.7)	6 (10.3)	2 (3.2)	31 (13.7)
Other	7 (6.6)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.6)	8 (3.5)

When asked by the moderator what the price is to attend the college they had chosen, tuition and fees ranged from $14K to $36K a year before scholarships or aid. Most students did not perceive the stated tuition price as a barrier to application. Most indicated that they would pay less than $10K to attend college after discounts for tuition and financial aid. Students in Los Angeles planning to attend a non-SDA college were less likely to be receiving any type of aid or discount. About half indicated they would still attend the same college if a discount was not offered.

Telephone Survey

Chi-square analysis in Table 11 demonstrates that students attending Adventist colleges are more likely to receive offers of financial aid than students attending other colleges. There is no statistical significance between groups for the receipt of the Pell grant (Table 12), however, which is a need-based grant given by the federal government to families of limited means.

Table 11

Participants Offered Financial Aid

Group	*N*	%
Non-academy/other college ($N = 106$)	78	73.6
Non-academy/SDA college ($N = 58$)	52	89.7
Academy/SDA college ($N = 62$)	52	83.9

Note. $\chi^2 = 6.78$, $df = 2$, $p = .03$.

Table 12 displays the frequency and percentages of students receiving various forms of financial aid. Only 12.4% of the students reported being qualified to receive denominational tuition subsidy because of their parent(s)' denominational employment. Of these 28 students, 75.0% planned to attend an Adventist college.

Findings by Research Question

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked: By type of secondary school attended, what level of awareness of the NAD colleges is there among SDA youth?

Table 12

Frequency and Percentages of Types of Financial Aid Offers

Types of financial aid offers	Non-academy/ other college (*N*=106) *N* (%)	Non-academy/ SDA college (*N*=58) *N* (%)	Academy/ SDA college (*N*=62) *N* (%)
Need-based grant from the college	31 (29.2)	21 (36.2)	19 (30.6)
Grant from the state	34 (32.1)	15 (25.9)	13 (21.0)
Academic merit scholarship from the college	41 (38.7)	37 (63.8)	43 (69.4)
Talent scholarship from the college	22 (20.8)	30 (51.7)	25 (40.3)
Federal Pell Grant	27 (50.9)	16 (30.2)	10 (18.9)
Outside scholarship from community organization	38 (35.8)	14 (24.1)	14 (22.6)
Outside scholarship from church organization	10 (9.4)	9 (15.5)	14 (22.6)
Tuition subsidy because of parent's denominational employment	7 (6.6)	10 (17.2)	11 (17.7)

Focus Groups

There was an almost total lack of awareness of the NAD colleges among the non-academy students at the focus groups, both in Nashville and Los Angeles. This very surprising finding caused a discussion guide revision almost immediately. The moderator began probing for awareness levels of each NAD college. From a video clip of the Los Angeles group of public high-schoolers heading toward a public college (Non-Academy/Other College group), the moderator commented, "None of you have selected a religious school. Were you considering one?" There is silence. "No." The moderator reads off the names of the Adventist colleges. "Tell me if you've ever heard of them." After a few college names are read, one student asks, "Are these in, like, California?" "No, they are all over the country," the moderator replies.

Telephone Survey

In an unaided recall question, when students were asked which SDA colleges they were aware of in an open-ended question, the Non-Academy/Other College group was the least aware, with an average number of the schools they mentioned at 2.54 (Table 13). Ten percent of the Non-Academy/Other College group were not aware of any SDA colleges. The Non-Academy/SDA College group was next with top-of-mind awareness of an average of 4.48 colleges. The Academy/SDA College group was the most aware, with mentions on average of 6.31 colleges, which is more than twice as many as the Non-Academy/Other College Group.

When students were prompted to recall SDA colleges by being read a list of the colleges, awareness increased (Table 14). Awareness rose to an average of 7.10 SDA

Table 13

Unaided Awareness of Colleges

College	Non-academy/ other college (*N*=106) *N* (%)	Non-academy/ SDA college (*N*=58) *N* (%)	Academy/ SDA college (*N*=62) *N* (%)	χ^2	*p* value	Total	%
Andrews University	46 (43.4)	37 (63.8)	33 (53.2)	6.37	.041	116	51.3
Southern Adventist University	34 (32.1)	31 (53.4)	46 (74.2)	28.35	.000	111	49.1
Pacific Union College	22 (20.8)	32 (55.2)	42 (67.7)	40.49	.000	96	42.5
Loma Linda University	34 (32.1)	28 (48.3)	24 (38.7)	4.19	.123	86	38.1
La Sierra University	19 (17.9)	23 (39.7)	43 (69.4)	44.24	.000	85	37.6
Walla Walla College	14 (13.2)	27 (46.6)	41 (66.1)	50.95	.000	82	36.3
Southwestern Adventist University	20 (18.9)	13 (22.4)	35 (56.5)	28.45	.000	68	30.1
Oakwood College	32 (30.2)	15 (25.9)	15 (24.2)	0.80	.669	62	27.4
Columbia Union College	16 (15.1)	16 (27.6)	27 (43.5)	16.51	.000	59	26.1
Union College	16 (15.1)	14 (24.1)	22 (35.5)	9.24	.010	52	23.0
Atlantic Union College	9 (8.5)	12 (20.7)	26 (41.9)	26.57	.000	47	20.8
Canadian University College	2 (1.9)	7 (12.1)	15 (24.2)	20.68	.000	24	10.6

Table 13—*Continued.*

College	Non-academy/ other college (*N*=106) *N* (%)	Non-academy/ SDA college (*N*=58) *N* (%)	Academy/ SDA college (*N*=62) *N* (%)	χ^2	*p* value	Total	%
Kettering College of Medical Arts	2 (1.9)	1 (1.7)	7 (11.3)	9.53	.009	10	4.4
Florida Hospital College	1 (0.9)	1 (1.7)	6 (9.7)	9.49	.009	8	3.5
Newbold University	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (8.1)	13.53	.001	5	2.2
Avondale College	0 (0.0)	1 (1.7)	3 (4.8)	5.27	.072	4	1.8
Caribbean Union College	2 (1.9)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.6)	1.07	.585	3	1.3
Griggs University	0 (0.0)	2 (3.4)	0 (0.0)	5.85	.054	2	0.9
Other non-SDA	3 (2.8)	1 (1.7)	4 (6.5)	2.26	.324	8	3.5
None	11 (10.4)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.6)	10.35	.006	12	5.3
Average number of SDA colleges identified by group	269/106 = 2.54	260/58 = 4.48	391/62 = 6.31				

Table 14

Aided Awareness of Colleges

College	Non-academy/ other college (*N*=106) *N* (%)	Non-academy/ SDA college (*N*=58) *N* (%)	Academy/ SDA college (*N*=62) *N* (%)	χ^2	*p* value	Total	%
Loma Linda University	79 (74.5)	56 (96.6)	62 (100.0)	28.83	.000	197	87.2
Andrews University	78 (74.5)	51 (87.9)	62 (100.0)	21.55	.000	191	84.5
Pacific Union College	67 (63.2)	53 (91.4)	61 (98.4)	35.60	.000	181	80.1
Southern Adventist University	68 (64.2)	47 (81.0)	61 (98.4)	27.07	.000	176	77.9
Walla Walla College	59 (55.7)	55 (94.8)	62 (100.0)	57.65	.000	176	77.9
La Sierra University	54 (50.9)	50 (86.2)	62 (100.0)	54.79	.000	166	73.5
Columbia Union College	62 (58.5)	37 (63.8)	57 (91.9)	21.47	.000	156	69.0
Union College	57 (53.8)	40 (69.0)	58 (93.5)	28.73	.010	155	68.6
Southwestern Adventist University	51 (48.1)	42 (72.4)	60 (96.8)	43.15	.000	153	67.7
Oakwood College	66 (62.3)	36 (62.1)	48 (77.4)	4.67	.097	150	66.4
Atlantic Union College	44 (41.5)	33 (14.6)	48 (77.4)	20.49	.000	125	44.7

Table 14—*Continued.*

College	Non-academy/ other college (*N*=106) *N* (%)	Non-academy/ SDA college (*N*=58) *N* (%)	Academy/ SDA college (*N*=62) *N* (%)	χ^2	*p* value	Total	%
Canadian University College	24 (22.6)	24 (41.4)	52 (83.9)	59.71	.000	100	44.2
Florida Hospital College	18 (17.0)	17 (29.3)	32 (51.6)	22.50	.000	67	29.6
Kettering College of Medical Arts	15 (14.2)	15 (25.9)	33 (53.2)	29.87	.000	63	27.9
Griggs University	11 (10.4)	8 (15.5)	14 (22.6)	4.57	.102	34	15.0
Average number of SDA colleges identified by group	753/106 = 7.10	564/58 = 9.72	772/62 = 12.45				

colleges within the Non-Academy/Other College group and to an average of 12.45 within the Academy/SDA College group. The Academy/SDA College group outpaces both the Non-Academy/SDA College and Non-Academy/Other College groups on awareness both in unaided and aided recall.

Individual college leaders on unaided awareness were Andrews University and Southern Adventist University. On most individual colleges, the academy students were

significantly more aware of the colleges than the students in the other groups. Individual college leaders on aided awareness were Loma Linda University and Andrews University.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked: By type of secondary school attended, what college attributes are motivators (important influencers) to the SDA young person, and how are the SDA colleges perceived to perform on attributes that are viewed as important?

The prospective students were asked for the overall motivators (also called *factors, attributes, characteristics*, or *criteria*) that they considered important when selecting a college.

Focus Groups

Table 15 shows the number of mentions of top college motivators in the focus groups. The Non-Academy/Other College group considered the following factors: reputation (best programs for desired major, prominent alumni, good graduation rate), affordability, student/teacher ratio, campus activities, and campus location. Religious affiliation was not important, with one student mentioning that they can participate in worship on an individual basis.

The top motivators for SDA college-bound students to attend an SDA college included a spiritual environment, friends attending college, being around people with similar values, a welcoming and community-oriented environment, and financial aid and scholarships. These students were looking for attributes that are closely aligned with what SDA colleges offer.

Table 15

Focus Groups: Mentions of Motivators by Group

Motivator	Non-academy/ other college (*N*=10)	Non-academy/ SDA college (*N*=7)	Academy/ SDA college (*N*=16)
Programs offered	4	1	2
Location (e.g., close to home or farther away)	1	2	3
Good reputation	3	2	2
Location (e.g., like the area, in the city)	2	0	5
Friends/family attending/attended	1	1	5
Spiritual environment/affiliation	0	3	7
Nice campus/facilities	0	1	0
Good career possible/make money	2	0	2
Sports program/intramurals	2	0	2
Affordability	0	2	3
Amount of scholarship	2	0	4
Girl-to-guy ratio	1	0	0
Class size	2	0	0
Student-teacher ratio	2	1	0
Failure rate/graduation rate	1	0	0
Greek life/campus activities	2	0	1
Size of campus	1	0	1
Relationship with teacher	2	1	3
Reputation of faculty	1	0	2
Prominent alumni	1	0	0
Tutoring/study groups	1	0	0
Recommended by parent/friend	0	0	1

The moderator later asked each group why they might consider an SDA college. Students who were planning to attend a non-SDA college offered several reasons they would consider an SDA college, including: helpful professors, smaller class sizes, a caring environment, and an opportunity to meet other SDA friends.

A Los Angeles student from the Non-Academy/Other College group said, "I like to be one on one. I want the teacher to be able to come talk to me and help me out. If there are 150 students and one teacher, you can't do that. You want them to know that you're in class." The moderator then asked the group, "To how many of you is this important, that the professor gets to know you by name?" All nine in that group raised their hands.

In the Los Angeles Non-Academy/SDA College group, a student spoke of the value of colleges that have a personal touch. "SDA schools will try extra hard to help you out, but in public school they don't give you that much attention."

With both groups, the religious affiliation and relationships with students of the same beliefs were mentioned as unique features of an SDA college.

Students and parents—especially in Nashville, where religion tended to be a higher priority—felt that being a Seventh-day Adventist has an impact on their educational choice. Students who attended a public school felt it was more challenging than attending an academy, since teachers and peers at public schools do not understand why they could not play sports on a Friday night, and the other students do not share their values. In the SDA system there is a lot more understanding since everyone shares the same beliefs. "Being Adventist is not a normal thing; nothing beats being with other Adventist kids," said one student.

Telephone Survey

The telephone survey contained five questions that provide information about college attributes that are motivators and important influencers in the college-choice decision. Each question is addressed here with the findings:

1. *Question 6a: What was most important to you as you were trying to find a college that was right for you?*

When asked what the most important factor was in choosing a college, Table 16 shows the top five most important factors that emerged unaided across all groups: best program in my major, close to home, students sharing the same spiritual beliefs and values, the campus environment, and a good quality education. The next five most important factors were: cost, good location, must be SDA, worship opportunities, and best financial aid package.

When the factors are grouped by category and aggregated, Quality Education becomes the most important category, followed by Spiritual Environment. However, the data in Table 16 show a wide variety of responses, and the differences can be noted when viewing the data by group. The most important factor to the Non-Academy/Other College group is close to home followed by best program in my major. In this group, the Spiritual Environment category factors are mentioned by only 4.7% of this group's students.

In sharp contrast, the Non-Academy/SDA College group considers students sharing same spiritual beliefs/values as the most important factor, followed by best program in my major. The Spiritual Environment category is mentioned by 43.1% of the students in this group.

Table 16

Most Important Factor: Unaided

Most important factor	Non-academy/ other college (*N*=106) *N* (%)	Non-academy/ SDA college (*N*=58) *N* (%)	Academy/ SDA college (*N*=62) *N* (%)	Total (*N*=226) *N* (%)
Quality				
Best program in my major	19 (17.9)	7 (12.1)	12 (19.4)	38 (16.8)
Good-quality education	9 (8.5)	4 (6.9)	3 (4.8)	16 (7.1)
Reputation of the college	5 (4.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.6)	6 (2.7)
Accredited college	4 (3.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (1.8)
Spiritual Environment				
Students share same spiritual beliefs/values	0 (0.0)	11 (19.0)	9 (14.5)	20 (8.8)
Campus environment	5 (4.7)	5 (8.6)	6 (9.7)	16 (7.1)
Must be SDA	0 (0.0)	6 (10.3)	4 (6.5)	10 (4.4)
Worship opportunities	0 (0.0)	3 (5.2)	7 (11.3)	10 (4.4)
Cost				
Cost	11 (10.4)	2 (3.4)	2 (3.2)	15 (6.6)
Best financial aid package	7 (6.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	7 (3.1)
Location				
Close to home	21 (19.8)	3 (5.2)	7 (11.3)	31 (13.7)
Good location	9 (8.5)	4 (6.9)	2 (3.2)	15 (6.6)
Not too close to home	0 (0.0)	2 (3.4)	0 (0.0)	2 (0.9)
Surrounding community	1 (0.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.4)
Size				
Small class sizes	2 (1.9)	2 (3.4)	2 (3.2)	6 (2.7)
Right size	3 (2.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (1.3)
Friends/Family				
Friends attending school	0 (0.0)	2 (3.4)	0 (0.0)	2 (0.9)
Family legacy/parents or siblings attended	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.6)	1 (0.4)
Other				
Diversity	2 (1.9)	1 (1.7)	2 (3.2)	5 (2.2)
All other mentions	4 (3.8)	3 (5.2)	3 (4.8)	10 (4.4)
Don't know/refused	4 (3.8)	3 (5.2)	1 (1.6)	8 (3.5)

The Academy/SDA College group considers best program in my major first, followed by students sharing same spiritual beliefs/values. The Spiritual Environment category is mentioned by 41.9% of the students in this group.

So for two of the groups headed toward Adventist colleges, the Spiritual Environment is readily mentioned, without prompting, as one of the most important factors in college choice.

The Non-Academy/Other College group also shows the largest concern for cost as an important factor, with 17.0% of the group mentioning this factor. The category of Location also is important to this group, with 29.2% listing factors in the Location category as the most important.

2. *Question 6b: What else was important to you?*

The students were probed for additional important concerns, with multiple responses allowed in this question. Four factors from question 6a remain in the top five, with the addition of cost as a top important factor (replacing the campus environment from 6a). The top five from this question were: best program in my major, close to home, cost, students sharing the same spiritual beliefs and values, and a good quality education. Table 17 itemizes the lists of additional important factors by their frequency of mention as compared to the total number of responses, compared by groups. Quality Education and Spiritual Environment remain the top categories of attributes considered important in college selection.

Table 17

Other Important Factors: Unaided, Multiple Responses Recorded

Other important factors	Non-academy/ other college (*N*=114) *N* (%)	Non-academy/ SDA college (*N*=50) *N* (%)	Academy/ SDA college (*N*=81) *N* (%)	Total (*N*=245) *N* (%)
Quality				
Best program in my major	15 (13.2)	7 (14.0)	10 (12.3)	32 (13.1)
Good-quality education	5 (4.4)	6 (12.0)	3 (3.7)	14 (5.7)
Reputation of the college	7 (6.1)	4 (8.0)	2 (2.5)	13 (5.3)
Accredited college	9 (7.9)	1 (2.0)	3 (3.7)	13 (5.3)
Can graduate in four years	2 (1.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (0.8)
Graduation rate	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.2)	1 (0.4)
Spiritual Environment				
Students share same spiritual beliefs/values	5 (4.4)	1 (2.0)	11 (13.6)	17 (6.9)
Campus environment	3 (2.6)	3 (6.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (2.4)
Must be SDA	1 (0.9)	2 (4.0)	6 (7.4)	9 (3.7)
Worship opportunities	3 (2.6)	3 (6.0)	4 (4.9)	10 (4.1)
Cost				
Cost	10 (8.8)	2 (4.0)	6 (7.4)	18 (7.3)
Best financial aid package	5 (4.4)	0 (0.0)	5 (8.1)	10 (4.1)
Location				
Close to home	15 (13.2)	3 (6.0)	8 (6.2)	26 (10.6)
Good location	5 (4.4)	0 (0.0)	7 (8.6)	12 (4.9)
Not too close to home	2 (1.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (0.8)
Surrounding community	3 (2.6)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.2)	4 (1.6)
Size				
Small class sizes	2 (1.8)	2 (4.0)	1 (1.2)	5 (2.0)
Right size	1 (0.9)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.2)	2 (0.8)
Professors get to know you	1 (0.9)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.2)	2 (0.8)
Friends/Family				
Friends attending school	1 (0.9)	6 (12.0)	4 (4.9)	11 (4.5)
Family legacy/parents or siblings attended	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.2)	1 (0.4)

Table 17—*Continued.*

Other important factors	Non-academy/ other college (*N*=114) *N* (%)	Non-academy/ SDA college (*N*=50) *N* (%)	Academy/ SDA college (*N*=81) *N* (%)	Total (*N*=245) *N* (%)
Other				
Diversity	4 (3.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (1.6)
Variety of activities	0 (0.0)	2 (4.0)	2 (2.5)	4 (1.6)
All other mentions	2 (1.8)	1 (2.0)	3 (3.7)	6 (2.4)
Nothing	13 (11.4)	7 (14.0)	1 (1.2)	21 (8.6)

By group the factors range widely again, as shown in Table 17. The Academy/SDA College group mentions students sharing the same spiritual beliefs/values as their highest important factor in this second probe of important factors, with cost getting more attention as well. Location also picks up more mentions by the Academy/SDA College group in this question.

The Non-Academy/SDA College group lightened up their focus on Spiritual Environment in this second round of probing for important factors. They recorded many mentions on the Quality Education category, with 36.0% of their responses in that category.

The Non-Academy/Other College group still voiced importance for Quality Education and Location, but not quite as strong as in 6a. They recorded 10.5% this time on the Spiritual Environment category, up from 4.7% on Table 16, but still a weak showing for that category overall.

3. Question 10: What is the main reason that college was your first choice?

Question 10 follows after the question that asks which college was the student's first choice, so it provides a way to find out why a student selected their first-choice

college. It is important to note that many students were not planning to attend their college of first choice for various reasons and circumstances. Table 18 provides an overview of the reasons provided by the respondents. The top five reasons to emerge from this question for all students were: programs offered in my major, closest to home, friends attending school, students share same spiritual beliefs/values, and good location.

Each group rated main reasons in a different priority. The Non-Academy/Other College group indicated programs offered in major first, followed by closest to home. The Non-Academy/SDA College group picked two main reasons that were tied for first place: friends attending school and programs offered in major. The Academy/SDA College group rated closest to home first, followed by programs offered in major; 41.9% of this group indicated factors in the Location category as a main reason.

4. *Question 12: Using the following scale, where 3 means very important and 1 means not important, please tell me how important each of the following were as you tried to select a college that was right for you.*

Question 12 provided the respondents with 14 college attributes to rank for importance. Table 19 shows the breakdown by group of the respondents who designated each factor as "very important." A high-quality education, affordability and scholarships, classes taught by professors, and a spiritual environment emerge at the top of the importance rankings to be the strongest motivators across all groups.

However, although top motivators arise among all participants, there are differences worth noting among the groups. The Academy/SDA College group ranked the factor about spiritual opportunities to be the most important, with 82.3% of the group choosing that as a very important attribute. Following behind that attribute is a reputation

Table 18

Main Reason College First Choice

Main reason	Non-academy/ other college (*N*=106) *N* (%)	Non-academy/ SDA college (*N*=58) *N* (%)	Academy/ SDA college (*N*=62) *N* (%)	Total (*N*=226) *N* (%)
Quality education				
Programs offered in major	16 (15.1)	12 (20.7)	11 (17.7)	39 (17.3)
Good-quality education	2 (1.9)	1 (1.7)	1 (1.6)	4 (1.8)
Reputation of the college	4 (3.8)	7 (12.1)	1 (1.6)	12 (5.3)
Spiritual Environment				
Students share same spiritual beliefs/values	6 (5.7)	6 (10.3)	9 (14.5)	21 (9.3)
Cost				
Cost	8 (7.5)	1 (1.7)	2 (3.2)	11 (4.9)
Financial aid, grants, scholarships	4 (3.8)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.6)	5 (2.2)
Location				
Closest to home	13 (12.3)	7 (12.1)	16 (25.8)	36 (15.9)
Good location	5 (4.7)	4 (6.9)	10 (16.1)	19 (8.4)
Friends/Family				
Friends attending school	1 (0.9)	12 (20.7)	9 (14.5)	22 (9.7)
Family legacy/parents or siblings attended	3 (2.8)	5 (8.6)	2 (3.2)	10 (4.4)
Other				
Visited/nice campus	6 (5.7)	4 (1.8)	6 (9.7)	16 (7.1)
Friendly people/the staff/ the professors	3 (2.8)	0 (0.0)	4 (6.5)	7 (3.1)
All other reasons	12 (11.3)	5 (8.6)	2 (3.2)	19 (8.4)

Table 19

Criteria Ranked as "Very Important," Ordered by Non-Academy/Other College Group

College attribute	Non-academy/ other college (*N*=106) *N* (%)	Non-academy/ SDA college (*N*=58) *N* (%)	Academy/ SDA college (*N*=62) *N* (%)	Total (*N*=226) *N* (%)
The college helps you find the means to make it affordable to attend	91 (85.8)	35 (60.3)	47 (75.8)	173 (76.5)
The college has a reputation for high-quality education	87 (82.1)	49 (84.5)	49 (79.0)	185 (81.9)
The college offers academic scholarships to high-achieving students	74 (69.8)	45 (77.6)	45 (72.6)	164 (72.6)
Classes are taught by professors rather than teaching assistants	61 (57.5)	43 (74.1)	44 (71.0)	148 (65.5)
The college is well known by potential employers	59 (55.7)	23 (39.7)	25 (40.3)	107 (47.3)
It's located close enough to home for easy family visits	58 (54.7)	19 (32.8)	26 (41.9)	103 (45.6)
The college has a diverse student population	58 (54.7)	29 (50.0)	20 (32.3)	107 (47.3)
Professors get to know you by name	52 (49.1)	35 (60.3)	28 (45.2)	115 (50.9)
The college provides opportunities for you to support your spiritual or religious needs	49 (46.2)	45 (77.6)	51 (82.3)	145 (64.2)
There are plenty of on-campus activities in which to participate	48 (45.3)	27 (46.6)	38 (61.3)	113 (50.0)
Has smaller class sizes	41 (38.7)	24 (41.4)	23 (37.1)	88 (38.9)

Table 19—*Continued.*

College attribute	Non-academy/ other college (*N*=106) *N* (%)	Non-academy/ SDA college (*N*=58) *N* (%)	Academy/ SDA college (*N*=62) *N* (%)	Total (*N*=226) *N* (%)
The college is small enough to make it easy to meet new people	31 (29.2)	18 (31.0)	21 (33.9)	70 (31.0)
It's located far enough from home so you feel independent	30 (28.3)	16 (27.6)	17 (27.4)	63 (27.9)
Many of the students have the same beliefs and values that you do	23 (21.7)	30 (51.7)	35 (56.5)	88 (38.9)

for high quality, affordability and scholarships, and classes taught by professors rather than teaching assistants.

The Non-Academy/SDA College group indicated a high-quality education as the attribute chosen as very important by 84.5% of the group, followed by scholarships, spiritual environment, classes taught by professors rather than teaching assistants, and professors get to know you by name.

Eighty-five percent of the Non-Academy/Other College group picked affordability as the top factor, followed by high-quality education, scholarships, classes taught by professors rather than teaching assistants, and well known to potential employers.

5. Question 12, with the ranking of the important criteria, is paired with Question 18 to create perceptual maps of college-choice criteria. Question 18 asks the respondents

to use the same criteria in Question 12 to rate the performance of the Seventh-day Adventist colleges.

Image Mapping

In question 18, students were asked to indicate how the SDA colleges met their expectations on important attributes in question 12. The scale was 1 to 3, with 3 being "describes very well," 2 being "describes somewhat," and 1 being "does not describe." This, in essence, was a performance ranking of SDA colleges, based on each student's perception of Seventh-day Adventist colleges.

The "3" rankings from both questions were placed on an image map, also called a perceptual map. A perceptual map is a matrix that provides a graphic indicator of what attributes are considered "very important" compared to how expectations are being met in regard to the performance of SDA colleges and if the attribute "describes very well." The image map device used in this study was created by the firm Strategic Resource Partners for measuring college-choice attributes. Figure 3 is a guide to reading the image maps.

The matrix quadrants are labeled "Bonus," "Star," "Back Burner," and "Opportunity." The "Bonus" category, located in the upper-left quadrant, is where college characteristics are rated of lower importance, with high performance levels indicated, which means that expectations are being exceeded. The "Star" category in the upper-right quadrant is where college characteristics are rated as highly important and college expectations are being exceeded. In the lower-left quadrant is the "Back Burner" category, where characteristics have low importance and are also not meeting expectations. In this quadrant, since the attributes are not rated as highly important, colleges need not invest a lot of time and money trying to move the perceptions of these

attributes into another quadrant, hence the "Back Burner" label. In the "Opportunity" quadrant in the lower-right corner, college characteristics are ranked as highly important and the colleges are not meeting expectations. Here is a college's "opportunity" to move a perception into the "Star" range by focusing on that attribute. A dotted line and a shaded area following the dotted line runs from the lower-left to the upper-right corners. Attributes plotted on or near the diagonal line and the shaded area indicate that performance closely meets expectations, which is the "sweet spot" where attributes are aligned in importance and performance.

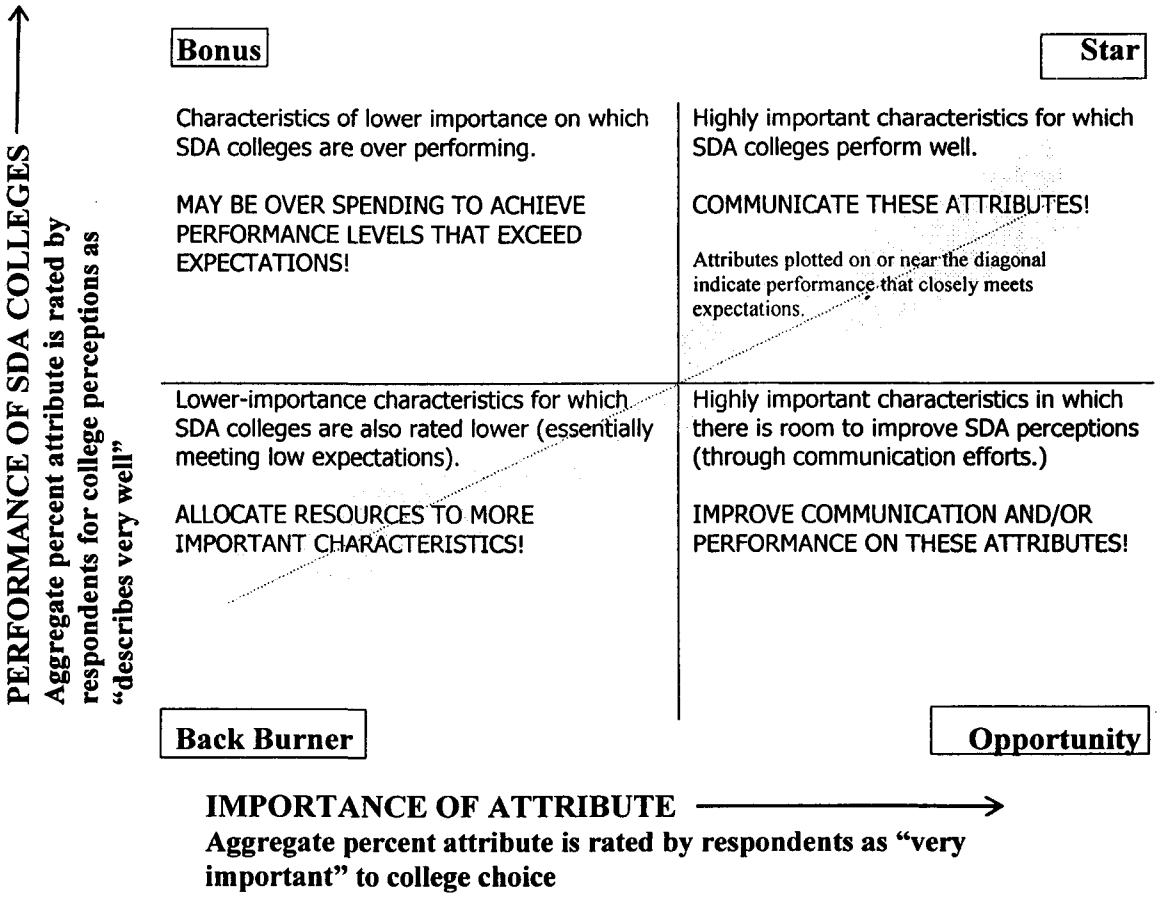
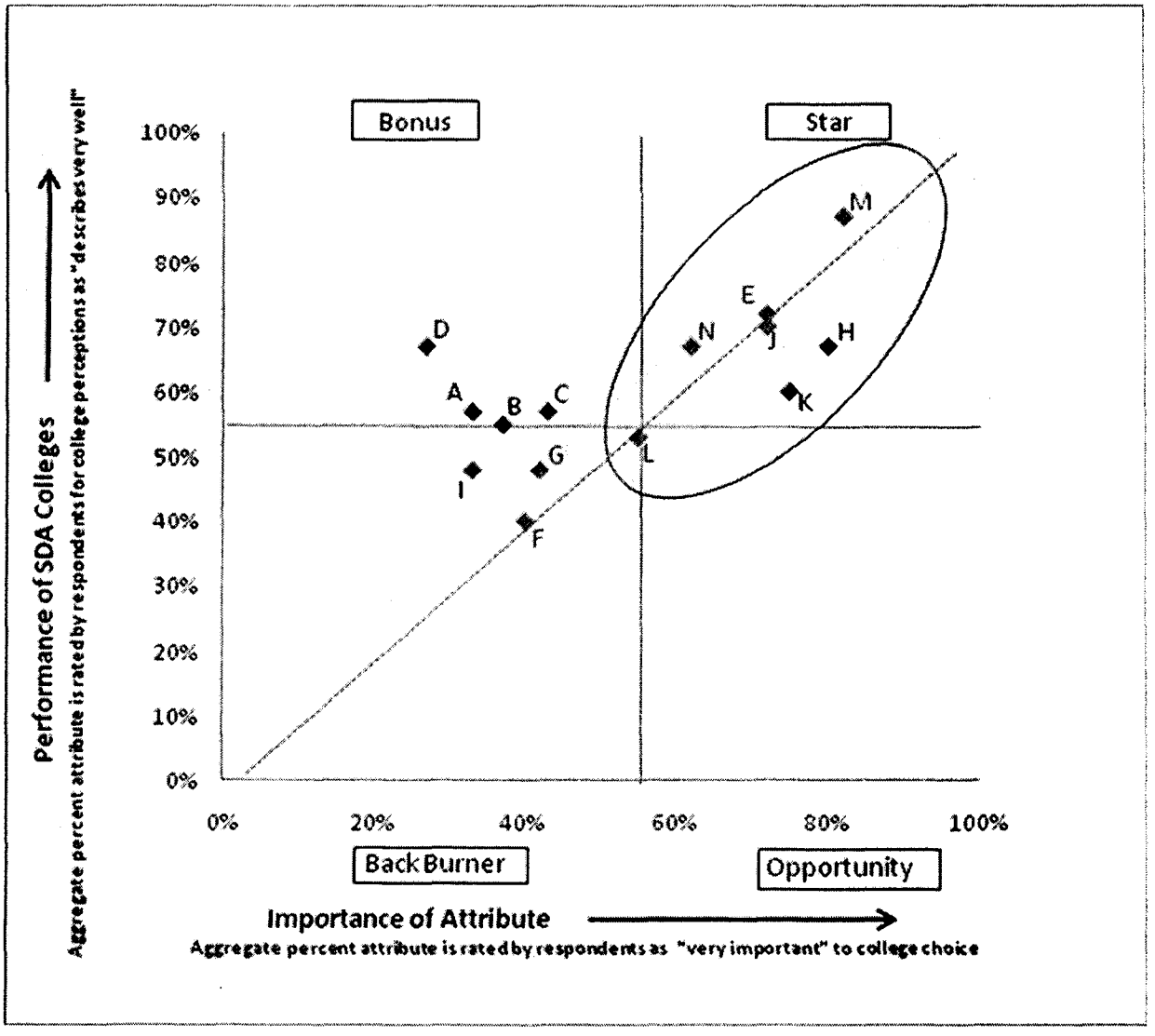


Figure 3. Guide to reading an image map. Image map matrix design copyrighted by Strategic Resource Partners, 4165 Shoreline Drive, Suite 226, Spring Park, MN, 55384.

Figure 4 is an image map of the rankings of the Academy/SDA College group. A large number of college characteristics fall into the "Star" quadrant, which means that the SDA colleges are exceeding expectations on a number of college characteristics that are considered highly important by the Academy/SDA College group. SDA colleges are a good fit for the Academy/SDA College group, with important characteristics aligned with high rankings on performance.

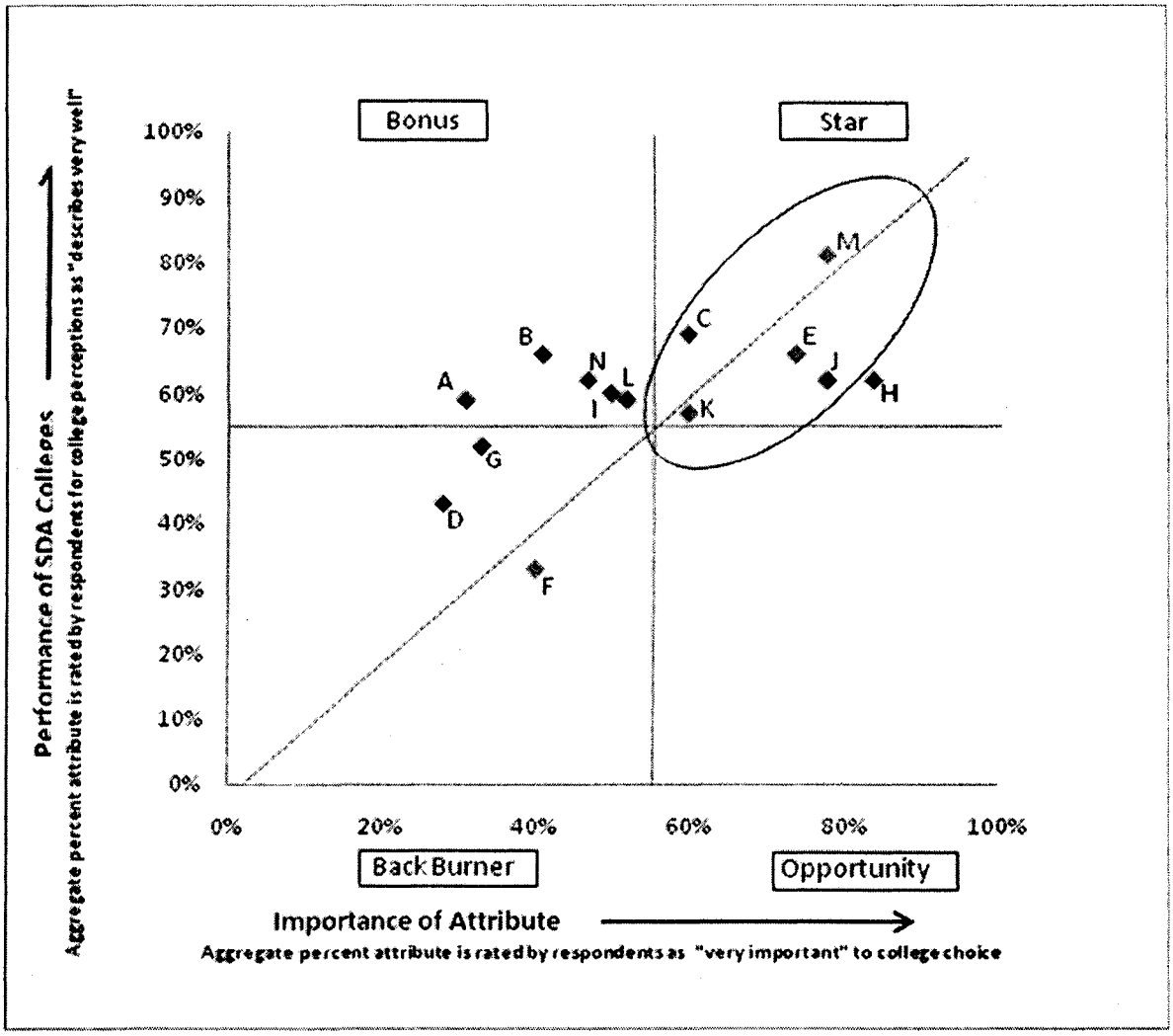
The Academy/SDA College group highly regards SDA colleges for many qualities, including providing opportunities to support spiritual needs, having professors rather than assistants teach classes, offering academic scholarships, having a reputation for high quality, finding the means to make it affordable, offering plenty of campus activities, and having students who share similar values and beliefs.

The image map of the Non-Academy/SDA College group, Figure 5, also shows a strong alignment with characteristics offered by Adventist colleges, but not as close of an alignment as with the Academy/SDA College group. For the Non-Academy/SDA College group, the location characteristics fall to the lower-left quadrant, an indication that they are unimportant, and an indication that the SDA colleges do not perform well on these characteristics. However, SDA colleges are a fairly good fit in the Non-Academy/SDA College group's eyes, with highly valued factors including providing support for spiritual needs, having professors rather than teaching assistants teach classes, and hiring professors who provide personal attention. The Non-Academy/SDA College group also ranks the academic reputation of SDA colleges as high, although not quite as high as the Academy/SDA College group.



A	Small enough to make it easy to meet new people	H	Reputation for high-quality education
B	Smaller classes	I	Diverse student population
C	Professors know you by name	J	Offers academic scholarships to high achievers
D	Far enough from home so you feel independent	K	Helps you find the means to make it affordable to attend
E	Classes taught by professors rather than teaching assistants	L	Students have same beliefs and values as you
F	Well known by potential employers	M	Provides opportunities to support spiritual or religious needs
G	Close enough to home for easy family visits	N	Plenty of on-campus activities

Figure 4. Image map for Academy/SDA College group. Adapted from *Enrollment Assessment—Student Results,* by Strategic Resource Partners, October 2005, Presentation to the Association of Adventist Colleges and Universities, Silver Spring, MD.



A	Small enough to make it easy to meet new people	H	Reputation for high-quality education
B	Smaller classes	I	Diverse student population
C	Professors know you by name	J	Offers academic scholarships to high achievers
D	Far enough from home so you feel independent	K	Helps you find the means to make it affordable to attend
E	Classes taught by professors rather than teaching assistants	L	Students have same beliefs and values as you
F	Well known by potential employers	M	Provides opportunities to support spiritual or religious needs
G	Close enough to home for easy family visits	N	Plenty of on-campus activities

Figure 5. Image map for Non-Academy/SDA College group. Adapted from *Enrollment Assessment—Student Results,* by Strategic Resource Partners, October 2005, Presentation to the Association of Adventist Colleges and Universities, Silver Spring, MD.

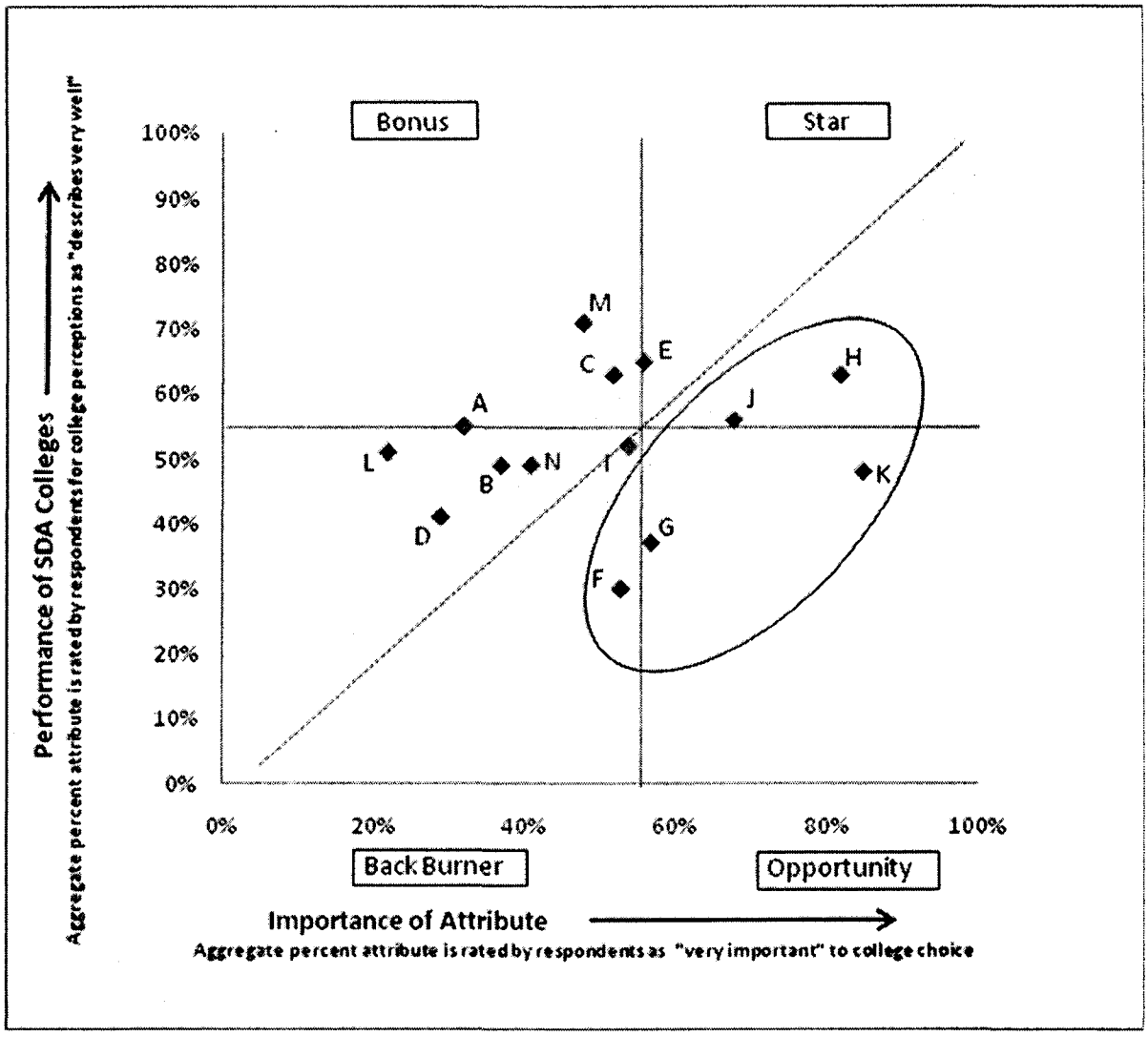
The Non-Academy/Other College group, Figure 6, displays a completely different image map than the Academy/SDA College group or the Non-Academy/SDA College group, with altogether different importance ratings for college characteristics as well as performance rankings of the SDA colleges. Clearly, the students in this group value different attributes than the other two groups, and are not aligned well with SDA colleges. All attributes ranked as highly important show room for improvement from the SDA colleges on the expectations side. This is clearly an underserved population that has little awareness of SDA colleges and what they offer. Interestingly enough, the performance ranking for reputation for high quality is almost as high as the Academy/SDA College group; so across all groups, SDA colleges are perceived as providing a high-quality education.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked: By type of secondary school attended, what are barriers to choosing an SDA college?

Focus Groups

Table 20 shows the top mentions of barriers by the students in the focus groups. Among students who were planning to attend a non-SDA college, barriers to attending an SDA college included the perception of lifestyle restrictions (including mandatory worship, a conservative dress code [no jewelry], diet restrictions, a strict or opinionated environment, no legitimate sports programs, and no fun) or a desire to attend a big-name school. These barriers were especially apparent in Los Angeles.



A	Small enough to make it easy to meet new people	H	Reputation for high-quality education
B	Smaller classes	I	Diverse student population
C	Professors know you by name	J	Offers academic scholarships to high achievers
D	Far enough from home so you feel independent	K	Helps you find the means to make it affordable to attend
E	Classes taught by professors rather than teaching assistants	L	Students have same beliefs and values as you
F	Well known by potential employers	M	Provides opportunities to support spiritual or religious needs
G	Close enough to home for easy family visits	N	Plenty of on-campus activities

Figure 6. Image map for Non-Academy/Other College group. Adapted from *Enrollment Assessment—Student Results,* by Strategic Resource Partners, October 2005, Presentation to the Association of Adventist Colleges and Universities, Silver Spring, MD.

Table 20

Focus Groups: Number of Mentions of Barriers by Group

Barriers	Non-academy/ other college (*N*=10)	Non-academy/ SDA college (*N*=7)	Academy/ SDA college (*N*=16)
Cost	2	1	1
Location (e.g., too close to home or too far away)	3	0	2
Strict rules (dress, diet, etc.)	3	0	1
Too big	3	0	0
Forced worship	3	1	1
Not the best	1	0	0
Not enough diversity	0	0	1
Party school	1	0	0
No legitimate sports program	1	0	0
Weather too cold	0	0	1
Do not have my major/major not strong	2	0	0

Colleges were eliminated for a variety of reasons, including location and distance from home, being too expensive, or in too cold a weather region, or for not being strong in a desired major. Some non-SDA colleges were eliminated for being too big, for being a party school, or for not delivering the best education.

When asked why an Adventist college was not chosen, a Non-Academy/Other College group student in a Nashville focus group said, "I'm not really rejecting an SDA college. I still will be going to church. I just don't want to go where I am going to eat, sleep, and breathe SDA!" Another Non-Academy/Other College group student in a Los

Angeles focus group said, "I want to be myself and wear what I want." Another said, "They judge you more, such as telling you what's right and wrong."

Another barrier discovered by conducting the focus groups was the lack of contact by the colleges with the students in the Non-Academy/Other College and Non-Academy/SDA College groups. Although this was not enunciated by any of the students, it was mentioned by the Los Angeles parent group after they discovered that the Adventist Church operated 15 colleges in North America. One parent said, "I noticed that other colleges were asking for Abby. I would like the SDA colleges to ask for the children that are in the church. None of those colleges contacted us or sent a letter. They should be saying, 'Why don't you join our college, why don't you come over here, this is what we offer.' [There was] none of that." As a result of this discovery, a question about being contacted or recruited by an Adventist college was then added to the telephone survey.

Telephone Survey

Of the students surveyed, significant differences exist in the level that the student groups are being recruited. A total of 71.0% in the Academy/SDA College group were recruited by an SDA college or university, in contrast to only 44.8% in the Non-Academy/SDA College group and 22.6% in the Non-Academy/Other College group (Table 21). Students are more likely to attend an SDA college if they are actively recruited. Students who attended an academy were the most likely to have been influenced by SDA college recruiting. Students in the Non-Academy/Other College and the Non-Academy/SDA College groups are significantly under-recruited as compared to the Academy/SDA College group.

Table 21

Recruitment Levels by SDA Colleges

Recruited by SDA college?	Non-academy/ other college (*N*=106) *N* (%)	Non-academy/ SDA college (*N*=58) *N* (%)	Academy/ SDA college (*N*=62) *N* (%)
Yes	24 (22.6)	26 (44.8)	44 (71.0)
No	82 (77.4)	32 (55.2)	18 (29.0)

Note. $\chi^2 = 37.94$, $df = 2$, $p = .000$.

Information about possible barriers was also taken from students who had applied to an Adventist college but then decided not to attend (Table 22). Thirty-six of the 106 students in the Non-Academy/Other College group had applied but had decided not to attend. Eleven of these students, or about 30% of this group, cited cost, tuition, or lack of scholarships as the reason they were not planning to attend an Adventist college.

The remaining 70 students in the Non-Academy/Other College group who did not apply to an Adventist college were asked why they did not apply to an Adventist college or university. Table 23 indicates that cost, location, and lack of knowledge were reasons for not applying.

Eight positioning statements were read to the students to see if they became less interested, more interested, or had no change of interest when considering these statements of value concerning Adventist colleges. It was thought that those who became less interested may actually be saying that the positioning statement is, in effect, a barrier to their interest in an Adventist college. However, less than 5% of the respondents in any

Table 22

Reason for Not Attending After Applying to an SDA College: Non-Academy/Other College Group

Barrier	Non-academy/ other college (*N*=36) *N* (%)
Cost/price/tuition	8 (22.2)
Not enough scholarships	3 (8.3)
Wasn't preferred choice	2 (5.6)
Want non-SDA experience	1 (2.8)
Did not know/all other reasons	8 (22.2)
No response	14 (38.9)

Table 23

Reason for Not Applying to SDA College: Non-Academy/Other College Group

Barrier	Non-academy/ other college (*N*=70) *N* (%)
Cost/price/tuition	16 (22.9)
Programs offered/did not have my major	4 (5.7)
Location/too far away	16 (22.9)
Curfew/rules/can't watch TV	1 (1.4)
Grades/test scores not high enough	3 (4.3)
Didn't know about SDA colleges	8 (11.4)
Not interested	7 (10.0)
Did not know/all other reasons	5 (7.1)
No response	10 (14.3)

of the groups reported that any of the statements made them less interested, and therefore no barriers were identified through the use of the positioning statements.

Another way to uncover barriers is to check the SDA college attributes that scored poorly on the performance criteria in question 18. Respondents were asked to rate their perception of SDA colleges on a variety of factors using a scale of 1 to 3. If the respondent chose 1 for *does not describe*, which is the lowest category on the scale, this indicates that the respondent does not believe that Adventist colleges perform well on this attribute.

In addition, if the respondent replied that they *don't know*, this indicates a knowledge barrier of the offerings and benefits of SDA colleges. Table 24 contains the ratings of college attributes and shows both the respondents by group who marked *does not describe* and respondents who marked *don't know*.

The table demonstrates that a significantly higher proportion of the Non-Academy/Other College students marked *don't know* on the SDA college attributes and were unable to rate the factors. The data suggest that because of the group's unawareness of SDA colleges in general, as demonstrated earlier in the findings for Research Question 1, this group is significantly less knowledgeable about the offerings or benefits of SDA colleges than the other two student groups.

Using Chi-square analysis and standard residuals, the Non-Academy/Other College group also marked *does not describe* in significantly greater percentages than the other two groups. The top three statements, with more than 15% of the group rating them as *does not describe*, were the following: The colleges are well known by potential employers, the colleges are located far enough from home to feel independent, and the

Table 24

Rating of SDA College Attributes

Attribute	Non-academy/ other college (*N*=106) *N* (%)	Non-academy/ SDA college (*N*=58) *N* (%)	Academy/ SDA college (*N*=62) *N* (%)
	Small enough to make it easy to meet new people		
Does not describe	14 (13.2)	1 (1.7)	3 (4.8)
Describes somewhat	29 (27.4)	23 (39.7)	22 (35.5)
Describes very well	52 (49.1)	34 (58.6)	36 (58.1)
Don't know	11 (10.4)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.6)
$\chi^2 = 19.88$, $df = 6$, $p = .003$			
	Smaller classes		
Does not describe	7 (6.6)	1 (1.7)	1 (1.6)
Describes somewhat	40 (37.7)	18 (31.0)	26 (41.9)
Describes very well	47 (44.3)	38 (65.5)	33 (53.2)
Don't know	12 (11.3)	1 (1.7)	2 (3.2)
$\chi^2 = 14.39$, $df = 6$, $p = .026$			
	Professors know you by name		
Does not describe	6 (5.7)	3 (5.2)	3 (4.8)
Describes somewhat	26 (24.5)	13 (22.4)	21 (33.9)
Describes very well	58 (54.7)	40 (69.0)	35 (56.5)
Don't know	16 (15.1)	2 (3.4)	3 (4.8)
$\chi^2 = 10.51$, $df = 6$, $p = .105$			
	Located far enough from home so you feel independent		
Does not describe	21 (19.8)	9 (15.5)	6 (9.7)
Describes somewhat	35 (33.0)	24 (41.4)	14 (22.6)
Describes very well	42 (39.6)	25 (43.1)	42 (67.7)
Don't know	8 (7.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
$\chi^2 = 21.74$, $df = 6$, $p = .001$			

Table 24—*Continued.*

Attribute	Non-academy/ other college (*N*=106) *N* (%)	Non-academy/ SDA college (*N*=58) *N* (%)	Academy/ SDA college (*N*=62) *N* (%)
Classes are taught by professors rather than teaching assistants			
Does not describe	8 (7.5)	1 (1.7)	1 (1.6)
Describes somewhat	18 (17.0)	19 (32.8)	13 (21.0)
Describes very well	60 (56.6)	38 (65.5)	44 (71.0)
Don't know	20 (18.9)	0 (0.0)	4 (6.5)
$\chi^2 = 24.11, df = 6, p = .001$			
The colleges are well known by potential employers			
Does not describe	21 (19.8)	11 (19.0)	6 (9.7)
Describes somewhat	45 (42.5)	26 (44.8)	29 (46.8)
Describes very well	27 (25.5)	19 (32.8)	24 (38.7)
Don't know	13 (12.3)	2 (3.4)	3 (4.8)
$\chi^2 = 9.78, df = 6, p = .134$			
They're located close enough to home for easy family visits			
Does not describe	24 (22.6)	5 (8.6)	13 (21.0)
Describes somewhat	40 (37.7)	23 (39.7)	18 (29.0)
Describes very well	34 (32.1)	30 (51.7)	31 (50.0)
Don't know	8 (7.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
$\chi^2 = 19.16, df = 6, p = .004$			
The colleges have a reputation for high-quality education			
Does not describe	3 (2.8)	3 (5.2)	0 (0.0)
Describes somewhat	32 (30.2)	18 (31.0)	20 (32.3)
Describes very well	61 (57.5)	36 (62.1)	42 (67.7)
Don't know	10 (9.4)	1 (1.7)	0 (0.0)
$\chi^2 = 12.50, df = 6, p = .052$			

Table 24—*Continued.*

Attribute	Non-academy/ other college (*N*=106) *N* (%)	Non-academy/ SDA college (*N*=58) *N* (%)	Academy/ SDA college (*N*=62) *N* (%)
The colleges have a diverse student population			
Does not describe	8 (7.5)	4 (6.9)	4 (6.5)
Describes somewhat	34 (32.1)	19 (32.8)	27 (43.5)
Describes very well	52 (49.1)	35 (60.3)	30 (48.4)
Don't know	12 (11.3)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.6)
$\chi^2 = 13.67, df = 6, p = .033$			
The colleges offer academic scholarships to high-achieving students			
Does not describe	5 (4.7)	1 (1.7)	3 (4.8)
Describes somewhat	34 (32.1)	21 (36.2)	14 (22.6)
Describes very well	51 (48.1)	36 (62.1)	43 (69.4)
Don't know	16 (15.1)	0 (0.0)	2 (3.2)
$\chi^2 = 19.46, df = 6, p = .003$			
The colleges help you find the means to make it affordable to attend			
Does not describe	13 (12.3)	4 (6.9)	6 (9.7)
Describes somewhat	37 (34.9)	21 (36.2)	19 (30.6)
Describes very well	44 (41.5)	33 (56.9)	36 (58.1)
Don't know	12 (11.3)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.6)
$\chi^2 = 15.18, df = 6, p = .019$			
Many of the students have the same beliefs and values that you do			
Does not describe	11 (10.4)	4 (6.9)	4 (6.5)
Describes somewhat	32 (30.2)	20 (34.5)	24 (38.7)
Describes very well	51 (48.1)	34 (58.6)	33 (53.2)
Don't know	12 (11.3)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.6)
$\chi^2 = 13.50, df = 6, p = .036$			

Table 24—*Continued.*

Attribute	Non-academy/ other college (*N*=106) *N* (%)	Non-academy/ SDA college (*N*=58) *N* (%)	Academy/ SDA college (*N*=62) *N* (%)
The colleges provide opportunities for you to support your spiritual or religious needs			
Does not describe	5 (4.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.6)
Describes somewhat	21 (19.8)	11 (19.0)	7 (11.3)
Describes very well	72 (67.9)	47 (81.0)	54 (87.1)
Don't know	8 (7.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
$\chi^2 = 16.41, df = 6, p = .012$			
There are plenty of on-campus activities in which to participate			
Does not describe	10 (9.4)	4 (6.9)	1 (1.6)
Describes somewhat	34 (32.1)	17 (29.3)	17 (27.4)
Describes very well	48 (45.3)	36 (62.1)	41 (66.1)
Don't know	14 (13.2)	1 (1.7)	3 (4.8)
$\chi^2 = 14.88, df = 6, p = .021$			

colleges are located close enough to home for easy family visits. One could therefore postulate that this group considers the distance from home and the lack of recognition by employers to be barriers.

The Non-Academy/SDA College group identified only one barrier using this method: the lack of recognition by potential employers. The Academy/SDA College group also identified one barrier: the distance from home.

To summarize, barriers to enrollment, particularly among the Non-Academy/ Other College group and the Non-Academy/SDA College group, are a perception of strict rules, the distance from home, the lack of awareness of SDA colleges and universities, a

lack of knowledge regarding the offerings and benefits of SDA colleges, cost, and lack of recruiting attention.

Research Question 4

Research Question 4 asked: By type of secondary school attended, what marketing messages resonate with SDA youth?

Focus Groups

Ten positioning statements (Appendix D) were tested for impact on the participants' interest level in considering an SDA college or university. A three-point rating was used (1 = less interested, 2 = no change in interest, and 3 = more interested). Table 25 demonstrates the results from the focus groups.

Regional differences were noted regarding which messages increased interest in SDA colleges. The motivating themes among Nashville students, particularly those headed toward an SDA college, included a supportive environment, lifelong friendships, easy access to professors who provide personal attention, and spiritual growth and opportunities.

The motivating themes among Los Angeles students included affordable prices, a private education at a price better than most private colleges, and easy access to professors who provide personal attention. There was a higher interest in the financial aspects of attending college in the Los Angeles groups.

Two of the 10 statements, statement G and statement D, were eliminated for the telephone survey. Statement D was considered too similar with statement B, and G was considered too complex.

Table 25

Focus Groups: 10 Positioning Statements

Statement	Nashville		Los Angeles	
	SDA college (*N*=10) *N* (%)	Other college (*N*=3) *N* (%)	SDA college (*N*=8) *N* (%)	Other college (*N*=12) *N* (%)
A. Adventist colleges can offer you spiritual growth and spiritual opportunities that you simply can't find elsewhere.				
More interested	9 (90.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (75.0)	5 (41.7)
No change in interest	1 (10.0)	3 (100.0)	2 (25.0)	3 (25.0)
Less interested	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (33.3)
B. Adventist colleges provide you with a private college education at a better price than most private colleges.				
More interested	5 (50.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (75.0)	9 (75.0)
No change in interest	5 (50.0)	2 (66.7)	1 (16.7)	3 (25.0)
Less interested	0 (0.0)	1 (33.3)	1 (16.7)	0 (0.0)
C. Adventist colleges provide a Christ-centered education with classes taught by Christian professors.				
More interested	7 (70.0)	1 (33.3)	6 (75.0)	4 (33.3)
No change in interest	3 (30.0)	1 (33.3)	1 (16.7)	8 (66.7)
Less interested	0 (0.0)	1 (33.3)	1 (16.7)	0 (0.0)
D. Adventist colleges try to make a private college education as affordable as possible.				
More interested	4 (40.0)	0 (0)	7 (87.5)	10 (83.3)
No change in interest	5 (50.0)	3 (100.0)	1 (16.7)	1 (8.3)
Less interested	1 (10.0)	0 (0)	0 (0.0)	1 (8.3)
E. At Adventist colleges you have easy access to professors who understand the value of providing personal attention to each student.				
More interested	9 (90.0)	0 (0)	7 (87.5)	10 (83.3)
No change in interest	1 (10.0)	3 (100.0)	1 (16.7)	2 (16.7)
Less interested	0 (0.0)	0 (0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

Table 25—*Continued.*

Statement	Nashville: SDA college (*N*=10) *N* (%)	Nashville: Other college (*N*=3) *N* (%)	Los Angeles: SDA college (*N*=8) *N* (%)	Los Angeles: Other college (*N*=12) *N* (%)
F. At Adventist colleges you can develop lifelong friendships and relationships with students who share similar Christian beliefs and spiritual values.				
More interested	9 (90.0)	3 (100.0)	3 (37.5)	2 (16.7)
No change in interest	1 (10.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (62.5)	7 (58.3)
Less interested	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (25.0)
G. Adventist colleges provide a serene, welcoming environment with architecturally inspired campuses conducive to a learning environment.				
More interested	4 (40.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (75.0)	7 (58.3)
No change in interest	4 (40.0)	3 (100.0)	1 (16.7)	5 (41.7)
Less interested	2 (20.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (16.7)	0 (0.0)
H. Adventist colleges offer a supportive environment which "feels like family."				
More interested	10 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (62.5)	7 (58.3)
No change in interest	0 (0.0)	3 (100.0)	3 (37.5)	3 (25.0)
Less interested	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (16.7)
I. Adventist colleges offer many activities to enhance your college experience—athletics, weekend events, outreach opportunities, etc.				
More interested	5 (50.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (50.0)	7 (58.3)
No change in interest	5 (50.0)	3 (100.0)	2 (25.0)	5 (41.7)
Less interested	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (25.0)	0 (0.0)
J. Adventist colleges prepare Christian leaders who will be able to work and witness in a global society.				
More interested	4 (40.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (50.0)	0 (0.0)
No change in interest	6 (60.0)	2 (66.7)	4 (50.0)	6 (50.0)
Less interested	0 (0.0)	1 (33.3)	0 (0.0)	6 (50.0)

Telephone Survey

The remaining eight positioning statements about Adventist colleges were read to each participant. Table 26 shows that for the Academy/SDA College group, the top message was the "lifelong friendships and relationships"; in the Non-Academy/SDA College group, the top message was the "easy access to professors"; and in the Non-Academy/Other College group, the most compelling message was the one highlighting "spiritual growth." There were no significant differences among groups for any of the positioning statements.

Among all three groups, however, the top three messages that were most motivating were:

1. "Adventist colleges can offer you spiritual growth and spiritual opportunities that you simply can't find elsewhere."

2. "At Adventist colleges you have easy access to professors who understand the value of providing personal attention to each student."

3. "At Adventist colleges you can develop lifelong friendships and relationships with students who share similar Christian beliefs and spiritual values."

Research Question 5

Research Question 5 asked: What are the most effective ways to communicate with SDA young people regarding college choice?

Focus Groups

The students suggested that SDA colleges begin communicating with students at an early age, using schools and churches as the primary communication vehicles. Several

Table 26

Telephone Survey: Eight Positioning Statements

Positioning statements	Non-academy/ other college (*N*=106) *N* (%)	Non-academy/ SDA college (*N*=58) *N* (%)	Academy/ SDA college (*N*=62) *N* (%)
Adventist colleges can offer you spiritual growth and spiritual opportunities that you simply can't find elsewhere.			
Less interested	4 (3.8)	0 (0.0)	2 (3.2)
No change in interest	14 (13.2)	13 (22.4)	11 (17.7)
More interested	87 (82.1)	44 (75.9)	49 (79.0)
Don't know	1 (0.9)	1 (1.7)	0 (0.0)
$\chi^2 = 5.25, df = 6, p = .512$			
Adventist colleges provide you with a private college education at a better price than most private colleges.			
Less interested	5 (4.7)	2 (3.4)	2 (3.2)
No change in interest	34 (32.1)	17 (29.3)	21 (33.9)
More interested	64 (60.4)	38 (65.5)	37 (59.7)
Don't know	3 (2.8)	1 (1.7)	2 (3.2)
$\chi^2 = 0.96, df = 6, p = .987$			
Adventist colleges provide a Christ-centered education with classes taught by Christian professors.			
Less interested	5 (4.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.6)
No change in interest	32 (30.2)	20 (34.5)	13 (21.0)
More interested	68 (64.2)	38 (65.5)	48 (77.4)
Don't know	1 (0.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
$\chi^2 = 7.76, df = 6, p = .256$			
At Adventist colleges you have easy access to professors who understand the value of providing personal attention to each student.			
Less interested	3 (2.8)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.6)
No change in interest	25 (23.6)	10 (17.2)	10 (16.1)
More interested	77 (72.6)	48 (82.8)	51 (82.3)
Don't know	1 (0.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
$\chi^2 = 4.91, df = 6, p = .555$			

Table 26—*Continued.*

Positioning statements	Non-academy/ other college (*N*=106) *N* (%)	Non-academy/ SDA college (*N*=58) *N* (%)	Academy/ SDA college (*N*=62) *N* (%)
At Adventist colleges you can develop lifelong friendships and relationships with students who share similar Christian beliefs and spiritual values.			
Less interested	2 (1.9)	2 (3.4)	0 (0.0)
No change in interest	30 (28.3)	12 (20.7)	8 (12.9)
More interested	73 (68.9)	44 (75.9)	53 (85.5)
Don't know	1 (0.9)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.6)
$\chi^2 = 8.62$ $df = 6$ $p = .196$			
Adventist colleges offer a supportive environment which "feels like family."			
Less interested	5 (4.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
No change in interest	25 (23.6)	15 (25.9)	20 (32.3)
More interested	75 (70.8)	43 (74.1)	42 (67.7)
Don't know	1 (0.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
$\chi^2 = 8.09$, $df = 6$, $p = .232$			
Adventist colleges offer many activities to enhance your college experience—athletics, weekend events, outreach opportunities, etc.			
Less interested	3 (2.8)	1 (1.7)	0 (0.0)
No change in interest	37 (34.9)	18 (31.0)	13 (21.0)
More interested	65 (61.3)	39 (67.2)	49 (79.0)
Don't know	1 (0.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
$\chi^2 = 7.27$, $df = 6$, $p = .297$			
Adventist colleges prepare Christian leaders who will be Able to work and witness in a global society.			
Less interested	5 (4.7)	2 (3.4)	1 (3.5)
No change in interest	36 (34.0)	16 (27.6)	18 (29.0)
More interested	63 (59.4)	40 (69.0)	43 (69.4)
Don't know	2 (1.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
$\chi^2 = 4.75$, $df = 6$, $p = .576$			

suggested communicating with students in elementary school to teach and train them about college choices and SDA colleges. Additional suggestions included SDA college representatives making themselves well known to the SDA students attending public school by visiting SDA churches. Ideas included Saturday-evening college fairs at churches or education seminars at the churches.

Student comments regarding communication between SDA colleges or churches and prospective students included:

1. Begin communicating with high-school students in their freshman year.
2. Most families start visiting colleges in a student's junior year of high school.
3. Do not take it for granted that "if you are a Seventh-day Adventist, you will go to an Adventist school."
4. Show an interest in the student—a sense that you want them to attend your college.
5. The churches should educate students and parents about Adventist college options.
6. Improved communication is needed, including getting information out in time and providing answers in a timely manner.

Telephone Survey

Students were asked how they first became aware of SDA colleges. Table 27 shows the unaided percentages of sources of awareness from question 15. The Non-Academy/Other College group indicated that church events are the top sources of awareness, followed by word of mouth and college mailings. In contrast, students who attended academies identified a different set of methods for their top sources of becoming

Table 27

Unaided Source of SDA College Awareness With Multiple Responses, by Total Responses

Source of awareness	Non-academy/ other college (*N*=133) *N* (%)	Non-academy/ SDA college (*N*=75) *N* (%)	Academy/ SDA college (*N*=89) *N* (%)	Total (*N*=297) *N* (%)
Church				
Church pastor	9 (6.8)	5 (6.7)	3 (3.4)	17 (5.7)
Church events	20 (15.0)	14 (18.7)	9 (10.1)	43 (14.5)
Church newsletter	15 (11.3)	6 (8.0)	2 (2.2)	23 (10.2)
Church (in general)	4 (3.0)	3 (4.0)	0 (0.0)	7 (7.7)
Total	48 (36.1)	28 (37.3)	14 (15.7)	90 (30.3)
High school/academy				
College fairs	6 (4.5)	3 (4.0)	10 (11.2)	16 (5.4)
School counselors	9 (6.8)	4 (5.3)	11 (12.4)	24 (8.1)
Academy (in general)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	1 (0.3)
Total	15 (11.3)	7 (9.3)	33 (37.1)	55 (18.5)
College marketing				
College recruiters	3 (2.2)	3 (4.0)	10 (11.2)	16 (5.4)
Mailings	16 (12.0)	3 (4.0)	6 (6.7)	25 (8.4)
Email	5 (3.8)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	6 (2.0)
Total	24 (18.4)	6 (8.0)	17 (19.1)	47 (15.8)
People				
Word of mouth	17 (12.8)	13 (17.3)	6 (6.7)	36 (12.1)
People attending/alumni	4 (3.0)	2 (2.7)	2 (2.2)	8 (2.7)
Parents	11 (8.3)	12 (16.0)	11 (12.4)	34 (11.4)
Total	32 (24.1)	27 (36.0)	19 (21.3)	78 (26.3)
Media				
Magazine/Insight	3 (2.2)	2 (2.7)	1 (1.1)	6 (2.0)
TV	3 (2.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (1.0)
Internet/website	2 (1.5)	2 (2.7)	0 (0.0)	4 (1.3)
Total	8 (6.0)	4 (5.3)	1 (1.1)	13 (4.4)

Table 27—*Continued.*

Source of awareness	Non-academy/ other college (*N*=133) *N* (%)	Non-academy/ SDA college (*N*=75) *N* (%)	Academy/ SDA college (*N*=89) *N* (%)	Total (*N*=297) *N* (%)
Miscellaneous				
Grew up in the system	1 (0.8)	1 (1.3)	2 (2.2)	4 (1.3)
Local/already familiar	1 (0.8)	1 (1.3)	0 (0.0)	2 (0.7)
Visit to campus	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (3.4)	3 (1.0)
Other	1 (0.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.3)
Total	3 (2.2)	2 (2.7)	5 (5.6)	10 (3.4)
Don't know/refused	3 (2.2)	1 (1.3)	0 (0.0)	4 (1.3)

aware of the colleges—college fairs at the academies, parents, and college recruiters. The Non-Academy/SDA College group picked church events, word of mouth, and parents.

Students were asked in question 16a to name *the best way* for students to find out about SDA schools. The top choices among the Non-Academy/Other College group in Table 28 were mailings and e-mails from the colleges. The Non-Academy/SDA College group also chose mailings from the colleges, followed by college fairs. The Academy/SDA College group identified the college fairs and the college recruiters as the best ways.

Question 16b is an aided question, and the responses supplemented the data in question 16a. In this way, the major methods of communication were queried for effectiveness. Therefore the data from questions 16a and 16b are combined in Table 29 for the total ranking of effectiveness for major methods of communication from colleges.

Table 28

Unaided Best Way to Find Out About SDA Colleges

Best source	Non-academy/ other college (*N*=106) *N* (%)	Non-academy/ SDA college (*N*=58) *N* (%)	Academy/ SDA college (*N*=62) *N* (%)	Total (*N*=226) *N* (%)
Church				
Church pastor	9 (8.5)	3 (5.2)	1 (1.6)	13 (5.8)
Church events	7 (6.6)	4 (6.9)	0 (0.0)	11 (4.9)
Church newsletter	4 (3.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (1.8)
Church (in general)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.4)
Total	20 (18.9)	8 (13.8)	1 (1.6)	29 (12.8)
High school/academy				
College fairs	11 (10.4)	9 (15.5)	20 (32.3)	40 (17.7)
School counselors	4 (3.8)	2 (3.4)	3 (4.8)	9 (4.0)
Total	15 (13.9)	11 (19.0)	23 (37.1)	49 (21.7)
College marketing				
College recruiters	4 (3.8)	6 (2.7)	14 (22.6)	24 (10.6)
Mailings	20 (18.9)	10 (17.2)	6 (9.7)	36 (15.9)
Email	13 (12.3)	4 (6.9)	3 (4.8)	20 (8.8)
Total	37 (34.3)	20 (34.5)	23 (37.1)	80 (35.4)
People				
Word of mouth	3 (2.8)	3 (5.2)	4 (6.5)	10 (4.4)
People attending/alumni	0 (0.0)	1 (1.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.4)
Parents	2 (1.9)	1 (1.7)	0 (0.0)	3 (1.3)
Total	5 (4.6)	5 (8.6)	4 (6.5)	14 (6.2)
Internet/website	9 (8.5)	3 (5.2)	4 (6.5)	16 (7.1)
Other	9 (8.5)	6 (10.3)	4 (6.5)	19 (8.4)
Don't know/refused	11 (10.4)	5 (8.6)	3 (4.8)	19 (8.4)

Table 29

Combined Best Way/Effective Way to Find Out About SDA Colleges With Multiple Responses, by Number of Responses

Best source	Non-academy/ other college (*N*=723) *N* (%)	Non-academy/ SDA college (*N*=393) *N* (%)	Academy/ SDA college (*N*=406) *N* (%)	Total (*N*=1522) *N* (%)
Church				
Church pastor	88 (12.2)	48 (12.2)	38 (9.4)	174 (32.1)
Church events	87 (12.0)	48 (12.2)	44 (10.8)	179 (11.4)
Church newsletter	69 (9.5)	35 (8.9)	31 (7.6)	135 (8.9)
Total	244 (33.7)	131 (33.3)	113 (27.8)	488 (32.1)
High school/academy				
College fairs	87 (12.0)	45 (11.4)	58 (14.3)	190 (12.5)
School counselors	85 (11.8)	42 (10.7)	54 (13.3)	181 (11.9)
Total	172 (23.8)	87 (22.1)	112 (27.6)	371 (24.4)
College marketing				
College recruiters	85 (11.8)	44 (11.2)	56 (13.8)	185 (12.2)
Mailings	85 (11.8)	48 (12.2)	45 (11.1)	178 (11.7)
Email	62 (8.6)	30 (7.6)	30 (7.4)	122 (8.0)
Total	232 (32.1)	122 (31.0)	131 (32.3)	485 (31.9)
Parents	74 (10.2)	52 (13.2)	50 (12.3)	176 (11.6)
Don't know/refused	1 (0.1)	1 (0.3)	0 (0.0)	2 (0.1)

Communication methods that were mentioned by only 50% or less of respondents are not listed on Table 29.

The best and most effective way to reach the Non-Academy/Other College group is through the church pastor, church events, and college fairs. Parents score the highest for the Non-Academy/SDA College group, followed by the church pastor, church events, and mailings from the colleges. For the Academy/SDA College group, college fairs, college recruiters, and their academy counselors remained at the top of the list.

Summary of Findings

Chapter 4 presents the findings from phase one and phase two of the mixed methods study, including general demographic findings as well as findings reported according to each research question. The respondents were sorted into the three study groups and compared for many of the data analyses. Highlights of the findings are summarized here.

General Findings

The general findings are shown below:

1. Thirty-three students participated in focus groups in Nashville and Los Angeles; 253 phone interviews were conducted nationwide; 226 interviews were analyzed by group.

2. From the data set of 253, 64.8% were considered non-academy students and 35.2% were considered academy students. The breakdown of high-school types shows 53% attended public high school, 35% attended academy, 8% attended a non-SDA private school, and 4% were home schooled.

3. A larger proportion of females (60.9%) than males (39.1%) participated in the phone survey; minorities were 57.3%, Caucasians 41.9%; respondents from the West were the largest geographic group (43.1%), followed by the South (21.7%).

4. Of the total population of youth interviewed, 47.4% planned to attend an SDA college. Of the non-academy youth, 35.4% planned to attend an SDA college. Of the academy youth, 69.7% were planning to attend an Adventist college.

5. Of the total academy population, 56.2% were Caucasian and 43.8% were minorities. Caucasians attended academies at a significantly higher rate (47.2%) than

other ethnicities (Hispanic 33.3%, Asian 28.6%, and African American at 23.0%). African Americans attended public high schools at a significantly higher rate (72.1%) than all other ethnicities (Asians 61.9%, Hispanics 56.4%).

Findings From Data Set of 226

1. African Americans are attending non-SDA colleges at a significantly higher rate than other ethnicities.

2. A significantly higher percentage of Caucasians head to Adventist colleges from Adventist academies compared to other ethnicities.

3. Non-Academy/SDA College group had a significantly larger proportion of students who attended a private high school.

4. Non-academy students who attend a private high school are more likely to attend an Adventist college.

5. SDA public high-school graduates are attending other private colleges (not SDA) at a much higher rate than graduates of the other types of high schools.

6. Where a student goes to college is clearly related to the type of high school attended.

7. No significant differences were found in household income by group; however, up to 44% of each group declined to indicate, or didn't know.

8. If a student's parents attended an SDA college, there is a significantly higher likelihood that the student will attend an SDA college, even if they are not enrolled in an SDA academy.

9. If a student's parents did not attend an SDA college, there is a significantly higher likelihood that the student will not attend an SDA college.

10. No significant difference was found between groups in regard to church attendance or Sabbath observance.

11. Of the Non-Academy/Other College students, 14.2% indicated that an Adventist college was their first choice.

12. By individual SDA colleges, Southern Adventist University, Pacific Union College, and La Sierra University led the first-choice picks, attracting the most students from both the academy and non-academy groups headed toward SDA colleges.

13. Students headed toward SDA colleges were more likely to receive offers of financial aid than students headed toward public colleges.

14. No differences between groups were noted for receipt of the Pell grant.

15. More than 12% (12.3%) of the students qualified for SDA denominational subsidy; of that group, 75% planned to attend an SDA college.

Research Question 1: Awareness

1. Focus groups showed a marked lack of awareness of SDA colleges among non-academy groups both in Nashville and Los Angeles.

2. Unaided, there are significant differences in awareness among groups. Non-Academy/Other College students named 2.54 colleges; Non-Academy/SDA College students named 4.48; Academy/SDA College named 6.31.

3. The top two colleges in unaided awareness are Andrews University and Southern Adventist University.

4. Aided, there are significant differences in awareness among groups. Non-Academy/Other College recognized 7.10 colleges; Non-Academy/SDA College recognized 9.72; Academy/SDA College recognized 12.45.

5. The top two colleges in aided awareness are Loma Linda University and Andrews University.

Research Question 2: Motivators

1. Focus group students not going to SDA colleges considered these factors important: reputation, prominent alumni, good graduation rate, affordability, student/teacher ratio, campus activities, and campus location.

2. Focus group students going to SDA colleges considered these factors important: spiritual environment, friends, being around people with similar values, welcoming environment, and financial aid.

3. Unaided, the top 10 important factors in choosing a college among all groups, in order, are as follows: best program in my major, close to home, students sharing the same spiritual beliefs and values, the campus environment, good-quality education, cost, good location, must be SDA, worship opportunities, and best financial aid package. Aggregated by category, the top two categories are Quality Education and Spiritual Environment.

4. Unaided, the top two factors by group:

    a. Non-Academy/Other College: close to home, best program in my major. (Only 4.7% mentioned factors in the Spiritual Environment category)

    b. Non-Academy/SDA group: students sharing same spiritual beliefs/values, best program in my major. (Spiritual Environment category mentioned by 43.1%)

c. Academy/SDA group: best program in my major, students sharing same spiritual beliefs/values. (Spiritual Environment category mentioned by 41.9%)

5. Unaided, additional probing put cost in top five important factors.

6. Unaided, top five main reasons that the students picked their first-choice college: programs offered in my major, closest to home, friends attending school, students share same spiritual beliefs/values, and good location.

7. Unaided, top two main reasons by group:

a. Non-Academy/Other College: programs offered in major, closest to home

b. Non-Academy/SDA College: friends attending school, programs offered in my major

c. Academy/SDA College: closest to home, programs offered in my major. (41.9% indicated Location factors)

8. Aided ranking scale on college attributes showed five strongest motivators across all groups considered "very important": high-quality education, affordability, scholarships, classes taught by professors and not teaching assistants, and spiritual environment.

9. Aided ranking scale by group:

a. Non-Academy/Other College: affordability (85%), high-quality education, scholarships, classes taught by professors rather than teaching assistants, well known to potential employer

b. Non-Academy/SDA College: high-quality education (84.5%), scholarships, spiritual environment, classes taught by professors rather than teaching assistants, and professors get to know you by name

c. Academy/SDA College: Spiritual opportunities (82.3%), reputation for high quality, affordability and scholarships, and classes taught by professors rather than teaching assistants

10. Image mapping in Figures 4, 5, and 6 indicates an overall large perceptual difference about SDA colleges between the Non-Academy/Other College group and the other two groups. It is clear that this group values different attributes and is not well aligned with the benefits of SDA colleges.

11. However, across all groups, SDA colleges are perceived as having a reputation for a high-quality education, with no significant differences noted.

Research Question 3: Barriers

1. Barriers for focus group students not going to SDA colleges are lifestyle restrictions (mandatory worships, jewelry rules, dress code rules, diet restrictions), a strict or opinionated environment, no legitimate sports programs, and a desire to attend a big-name school.

2. Barriers for focus group students headed to SDA colleges are distance from home, the cost, and the cold weather in one region.

3. There is a significant difference in the level that the student groups are being recruited by the colleges: Non-Academy/Other College 22.6%; Non-Academy/SDA College 44.8%; Academy/SDA College 71.0%. This is a significant barrier to enrollment. Students are more likely to attend if they are actively recruited.

4. Barriers cited by students who applied but do not plan to attend, and students who did not apply are cost, lack of scholarships, location too far away, and lack of knowledge about the colleges.

5. A significantly higher proportion of the Non-Academy/Other College students marked "don't know" on the SDA college attributes and were unable to rate the factors, demonstrating a lack of knowledge.

6. The Non-Academy/Other College group also marked "does not describe" in greater percentages than the two other groups on the following attributes, which can be considered barriers: The colleges are not well known by potential employers, the colleges are located far enough from home to feel independent, and the colleges are located close enough to home for easy family visits.

Research Question 4: Messages

1. Ten positioning statements were tested in the focus groups, and eight positioning statements were tested in the telephone surveys.

2. Among all groups, both in the focus groups and in the telephone surveys, the top three messages that were the most motivating and the most likely to increase interest were:

   a. "Adventist colleges can offer you spiritual growth and spiritual opportunities that you simply can't find elsewhere."

   b. "At Adventist colleges you have easy access to professors who understand the value of providing personal attention to each student."

c. "At Adventist colleges you can develop lifelong friendships and relationships with students who share similar Christian beliefs and spiritual values."

Research Question 5: Effective Communication

1. Focus Groups: Communicate early. Show an interest in the student. Do not take it for granted that if you are SDA you will go to Adventist school. The churches should be involved.

2. Unaided, how groups first became aware of SDA colleges:

   a. Non-Academy/Other College: church events, word of mouth, college mailings

   b. Non-Academy/SDA College: church events, word of mouth, parents

   c. Academy/SDA College: college fairs at the academies, parents, college recruiters

3. Unaided, the best way to communicate with the groups:

   a. Non-Academy/Other College: mailings and e-mails from the colleges

   b. Non-Academy/SDA College: mailings from the colleges, college fairs

   c. Academy/SDA College: college fairs, college recruiters

4. Combined, the best way and most effective way to communicate with the groups:

   a. Non-Academy/Other College: church pastor, church events, college fairs

   b. Non-Academy/SDA College: parents, church pastor, church events, mailings from the colleges

c. Academy/SDA College: college fairs, college recruiters, academy counselors.

Chapter 5 offers an interpretation and discussion of the findings as well as recommendation for research and practice.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The first section of this chapter contains a summary of the purpose and methodology of the study, including the research questions. The second section offers a summary of the findings that emerged from the study, as well as an exploration and possible explanation of the findings. The third section states recommendations for practice and further study.

Purpose of the Study and Methodology

The Seventh-day Adventist Church views its colleges as training grounds for future church and lay leaders; therefore, the enrollment of significant percentages of Adventists in its colleges is important. The percentage of Adventist young people attending the NAD colleges has declined slightly over the last 10 years, and up to 75% of Adventist college-bound young people do not attend Adventist colleges or universities. The purpose of this study was to explore the views of Seventh-day Adventist college-bound participants on the factors (motivators and barriers) that influence their college choice. The information gained from the study will be used to recruit more Adventist

young people to SDA colleges, specifically those young people not attending an Adventist academy.

Research Questions

The main research question is *Why are Adventists not attending the Adventist colleges in greater numbers?* Supporting research questions are:

1. By type of secondary school attended, what level of awareness of the NAD colleges is there among SDA youth?
2. By type of secondary school attended, what college attributes are motivators (important influencers) to the SDA young person, and how are the SDA colleges perceived to perform on attributes that are viewed as important?
3. By type of secondary school attended, what are barriers to choosing an SDA college?
4. By type of secondary school attended, what marketing messages resonate with SDA youth?
5. What are the most effective ways to communicate with SDA young people regarding college choice?

Methodology

The research questions are addressed by the use of a mixed methods study using both qualitative and quantitative methods in a sequential two-phase design. This study analyzes the database commissioned by the Association of Adventist Colleges and Universities from the mixed methods study.

The first phase of the commissioned study is an explorative study of the motivators and barriers for non-academy and academy youth through focus groups with students and parents using purposive sampling. The insights discovered from the focus groups shaped the building of the survey instrument for the second phase—the quantitative telephone survey, which is primarily descriptive in nature.

Summary of Major Findings, Discussion, and Conclusions

Findings and Discussion

This section discusses the general findings followed by the findings for each of the five research questions identified in this study.

General Findings

Type of High School Attended

Findings

From the data set of 253 Adventist college-bound youth, 64.8% were non-academy students and 35.2% were academy students. Of the non-academy students, 53.4% attended public high school, 7.9% attended a non-SDA private school, and 3.6% were home schooled.

Of the total population of youth interviewed, 47.4% planned to attend an SDA college. Of the non-academy youth, 35.4% planned to attend an SDA college. Of the academy youth, 69.7% were planning to attend an Adventist college.

Where a student goes to college is clearly related to the type of high school attended.

1. Students who attend academy are more likely ($p<.05$) to attend an Adventist college.

2. Students who attend a non-Adventist private high school are more likely ($p<.05$) to attend an Adventist college.

3. Students who attend a public high school are more likely ($p<.05$) to attend a public college or another private college.

Discussion

The type of high school attended is a particularly important factor taken into consideration in this study in order to understand a Seventh-day Adventist student's choice of which college to attend. The high-school classification forms the basis of the groups in this study, with the non-academy students the target of considerable interest among the colleges.

According to Chapman (1981) in his model of student choice, it is necessary to take into account both the background and current characteristics of the student, as well as the student's family. As we discovered in the comparison of groups, the type of high school attended is a strong predictor of the type of college attended. Both the background factors and the general demographic characteristics of the students were studied and are reported here in this section of general findings.

The percentage of students attending or not attending the Adventist academies is the subject of much discussion and concern in the church. From this study, it appears that 65% of Adventist youth are not attending Adventist academies, or at least not graduating from academies, as this study only examines students immediately after they graduate from high school, and prior to their attendance at college in the fall. This percentage is

close to the common 70% or 75% reported in other publications, such as by Gillespie (Gillespie et al., 2004) in *Valuegenesis: Ten Years Later, A Study of Two Generations.* The Valuegenesis study involved youth attending SDA elementary schools and academies, and did not involve Adventists in public high schools, yet Gillespie (Gillespie et al., 2004) says, "In some conferences our research indicates that as high as 70% of the school-age students attend public education rather than choosing an Adventist Christian school" (p. 37).

It also appears from this study that 52.6% of Adventist college-bound youth do not attend Adventist colleges and that 47.4% do. These percentages may seem to imply that more Adventist youth are attending Adventist colleges than what has been published in the General Conference Commission on Higher Education (GCCHE, 2005), which states that 75% of college-bound Adventist young people are attending public or other private institutions, and only 25% of the college-bound youth attend SDA colleges.

In regard to minority populations and percentages, the robust *Avance* study by Ramirez-Johnson and Hernandez (2003) documents that the majority of Hispanic youth, 77%, are enrolled in public colleges. In comparison, this study shows that 51.3% of the Hispanic students who responded to the telephone survey are attending non-Adventist colleges, which means that this study possibly overrepresents Hispanics attending Adventist colleges by 25%.

Another possible overrepresentation is the percentage of academy students headed toward SDA colleges, which in this study is 69.7%. In actuality across the country, the figure is much lower, perhaps between 30 and 50%.

It is worth noting that these differences in percentages, and the possible over-representation of youth attending Adventist colleges, could be the result of a limitation of this study in regard to the population sampled. Because there was no church- or conference-provided list of Adventist youth in 2005, we purchased lists from high-school survey companies and asked for the databases of prospective students and inquirers to the NAD colleges, thus possibly skewing this study toward a higher percentage of students who attend Adventist colleges. For the purposes of comparing the three study groups on factors regarding their college-choice decisions, this study is valid, but it may be unwise to use this study to demonstrate the percentage of overall youth attending SDA colleges. Unlike the academy attendance percentages quoted above (65% of Adventist youth are not attending SDA academies), the percentages of SDA college attendance have probable limitations for generalization.

Ethnicity

Findings

A larger proportion of minorities, 57.3%, participated in the telephone survey than did Caucasians, 41.9%. Of the total academy population, 56.2% were Caucasian and 43.8% were minorities. Caucasians attended academies at a significantly ($p<.05$) higher rate (47.2%) than other ethnicities (Hispanic 33.3%, Asian 28.6%, and African American at 23.0%). African Americans attended public high schools at a significantly ($p<.05$) higher rate (72.1%) than all other ethnicities (Asians 61.9%, Hispanics 56.4%).

In addition, African Americans are attending non-SDA colleges at a significantly higher rate ($p<.05$) than other ethnicities, and a significantly higher percentage ($p<.05$) of Caucasians go to Adventist colleges from the academies as compared to other ethnicities.

Discussion

It is fascinating that the youth population in this study has a larger percentage of minorities than Caucasians. Since there are no published studies or reports of the Adventist youth population in the NAD, it is difficult to surmise if this represents the youth population accurately or not. The Avance study states that 14% of the Adventist NAD population is Hispanic (mirroring the 15% who responded to the telephone survey), which leads one to believe that the youth should not be predominantly minority. It appears that Adventist African Americans in particular are either attending or graduating in large part from public high schools and that the academy graduates in this study were predominantly Caucasian.

In *Seeking A Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream* by Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart (2007), the authors report that the racial balance in Adventism is very different from other Protestant churches as well as the United States as a whole. While other churches are fairly homogenous, Adventism is very mixed. In 2000, 54% of the membership was Caucasian, 30% African American, 11% Hispanic, 3% Asian, and 0.5% Native American. Caucasians are significantly underrepresented in Adventism as compared to the national population, according to the authors, and African Americans are represented at twice the national rate, making Blacks the "most successful" of the minority groups in the church (Bull & Lockhart, 2007, p. 147). This may help to explain the high percentage of minority participants (and the 24% African American response) in the telephone survey.

While one of the limitations of the study was that the colleges provided their databases of names of prospective students and inquirers, it should be noted that

Oakwood College, the NAD's only historically Black college, did not provide its database of inquirers for the study.

There is a definite recruiting market among the Hispanic, African American, and Asian youth for college marketers to tap. They are not attending Adventist academies, for the most part, and are also not headed toward Adventist colleges, for the most part. As Ramirez-Johnson and Hernandez advise the Adventist colleges in Avance, "Assume that Hispanics are unaware that your institution exists" (2003, p. 116).

Gender

Findings

A larger proportion of females (60.9%) than males (39.1%) participated in the phone survey. Of the females, 22.7% indicated an interest in nursing or allied health as a major.

Discussion

There should be no surprise that more females are college-bound in the Adventist Church, as this demographic mirrors a national trend in college-goers. According to an article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* by Linda Sax (2007), women are the majority of undergraduates in America, at 58%. Also, according to Becky Brodigan (2005), a presenter from Middlebury College at the October 29, 2005, College Board Forum, gender percentages at liberal arts colleges vary by ethnicity. In 2004, Hispanic women were attending at 61%, Asian American women at 66%, African American women at 59%, and Caucasian women at 57%. Since this study has a preponderance of women and also of minority respondents, this finding is to be very expected.

The enrollment gender gap can be attributed to increases in college attendance and college access by females from historically underrepresented groups, such as Hispanics and African Americans, says Sax (2007).

There are multiple sources of gender data for the Adventist Church in America. A recent article by Taashi Rowe from the Adventist News Network, posted on news.adventist.org, on October 29, 2007, states that 70% of the membership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is women. The NAD's Women's Ministries Department uses a "guesstimate" of 62% for the female membership percentage (C. Baker, personal communication, January 10, 2008). Bull and Lockhart (2007) report gender statistics from the General Social Survey Cumulative Datafile for the year 2000 (made available by the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research) for age distribution in the United States. The adult membership of the Adventist Church has a gender ratio of 61 females to 39 males, which is a wider gap than in most other Protestant denominations (around 55 to 45) and also a wider gap than in America as a whole (52 to 48). This may explain the study's larger female percentage.

While I do not have the male/female ratio for the NAD colleges, I share one university's information only as anecdotal information. At Southern Adventist University in Tennessee, the gender ratio for entering freshmen in 2006 was 43% male and 57% female.

Family Income

Findings

No significant differences were found in household income by group; however, up to 44% of each group declined to indicate, or didn't know. No differences were noted

between groups for the receipt of the Pell grant, which is a need-based Federal grant provided to families of limited means. Students headed toward Adventist colleges were more likely ($p<.05$) to receive offers of financial aid than students headed toward public colleges.

Discussion

As minority populations continue to be the fastest-growing in Adventism (Bull & Lockhart, 2007), it is often postulated that minority groups are less able to afford college than their Caucasian counterparts. It is often thought that the students attending public high schools, or the non-academy groups, cannot afford a private education and thus are forced to attend public high schools. However, interestingly enough, household income shows no significant differences across all groups in this study. In fact, when a crosstab was run with just household income and race for the total population in the study of 253, the only significant difference ($p<.05$) was that African Americans were more likely to have a household income of between $75,000 and $99,999. It should be noted, however, that up to 40% of each group chose not to answer the household income question, or they didn't know, so this result should be interpreted with caution.

Cost did surface as a factor of concern in the Los Angeles focus group; however, it was not the number one concern or barrier, but one of several mentioned. In the telephone survey, it was apparent that cost was more of a concern among the Non-Academy/Other College group. Because of this concern, affordability and the availability of financial aid need to always be included in communication with this non-academy group. According to Lewison and Hawes (2007), marketing approaches create value among prospective students. Instead of focusing on the negatives of price and cost,

marketing can build the value of the brand and the university image through its benefits and offerings, so that obstacles are seen through the lens of value (Hayes, 1993), much like the buyers of iPods or any other popular retail brands do not focus on the price of the iPod, but on the brand experience and the value they receive from the product. Because the university operates within a service environment and not a retail environment, marketing strategies and roles may be different (Liu, 1998), but the underlying marketing philosophy is a generic concept applicable to all organizations (Kotler, 1972).

In general, students attending private colleges receive more financial aid and scholarships than those attending public colleges and universities, since private schools offer more grants and scholarships due to their higher cost (CIC, n.d.). This was demonstrated in this study, in that those attending Adventist colleges were offered more financial aid than those attending other colleges.

Respondents were also asked what types of financial aid they were offered, and it should be noted there was no statistical difference across groups for the receipt of the Pell grant, which is awarded only to students whose families have very limited incomes. This suggests that no group was needier than the other groups.

Parental Influence

Findings

If a student's parent or parents attended an Adventist college, there is a significantly higher likelihood ($p<.05$) that the student will attend an Adventist college, even if they are not enrolled in an Adventist academy. The converse is also true, in that if a student's parent or parents did not attend an Adventist college, there is a significantly

higher likelihood ($p<.05$) that the student will not attend an SDA college. Of the Non-Academy/SDA College group, 34.5% had a parent who attended an Adventist college.

Discussion

It stands to reason that parents who have attended an Adventist college would want to give their children that same opportunity, particularly if they met their spouse and many good friends on an Adventist campus, which is often the case.

The influence of parents and family members, or what is called significant persons, in relation to college choice is well documented in literature (Astin, 1993; Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000; Chapman, 1981). Most good marketing plans for colleges also include a healthy dose of general publicity and communication about the reputation and merits of the institution, to keep the college in a good prestige position in the mind of these significant influencers (Litten, 1980a).

As the percentages of Adventists in the colleges decline, so do future Adventist enrollments, and the spiral will continue. Fewer parents attend an Adventist college—fewer children will attend, and so on. The students in the Non-Academy/SDA College group appear to be dependent on their link to family and friends in their choice to enroll at an SDA college, and they rank their parents as one of the most effective ways of reaching them; these parents are very important influencers in the college decision.

For the future of the church, then, if more and more students attend public schools and public colleges, we may lose the parental role model effect as Adventist students grow up and become parents themselves. The Non-Academy/SDA College group reports that over a third of its parents are alumni of Adventist colleges. This is an interesting crossover group, in that they did not attend an academy and yet they chose an Adventist

college. Parents who attended an Adventist school are indeed strong influencers of young people to also attend Adventist schools.

Connection to the Church

Findings

No significant difference was found between groups in regard to church attendance or Sabbath observance.

Discussion

When discussing the non-academy Adventist young person, leaders in educational circles often assert that these young people are not very close to the church and that is why they do not attend Adventist academies and colleges. To test this supposition, two questions were added to the telephone survey. Respondents were asked about their church attendance and their family's Sabbath observance. Chi-square shows no differences among groups, so this assumption is not correct. The Adventist students who attend public high schools or other private schools are just as likely to attend church and observe the Sabbath as the students attending Adventist academies.

Findings and Discussion by Research Question

Research Question 1: Level of Awareness

Findings

The focus group students in both Nashville and Los Angeles showed a marked lack of awareness of SDA colleges, particularly among the two non-academy groups. This finding was repeated in the telephone survey, and demonstrated a significant lack of awareness ($p<.05$), in both the aided and unaided awareness questions. Unaided, Non-

Academy/Other College named 2.54 colleges; Non-Academy/SDA College named 4.48; Academy/SDA College named 6.31. Aided, Non-Academy/Other College recognized 7.10; Non-Academy/SDA College recognized 9.72; Academy/SDA College recognized 12.45.

Discussion

I was present at every focus group, and the almost total lack of awareness among the non-academy students in the focus groups, both in Nashville and Los Angeles, was an eye-opening surprise. The Adventist colleges were not on the radar screen of most of these youth.

We conducted a parent focus group at each city as well, and although the parent groups are not a part of this study, parents were also unaware that the Seventh-day Adventist Church had 15 NAD colleges. The parents reacted the strongest and were annoyed that the church or their pastor had not communicated this with them. Parents in Los Angeles wondered why all of the non-Adventist colleges were soliciting their child, but none of the Adventist colleges had contacted the student or the parent.

The lack of awareness led us to modify the focus group discussion guide midway through the first group. The moderator, researcher Kevin Menk, was even more surprised than us by this lack of awareness. He has conducted extensive research for Lutheran colleges and had not experienced such a lack of awareness among the Lutheran youth. He assumed that the Adventist youth, with only a million members in North America (the Lutherans have 12 million members) and a relatively tight-knit community of believers, would have more knowledge of the Adventist colleges and their offerings.

The focus group discussion guide was modified to include an awareness question about each college in the NAD, and more time was spent in brainstorming how the colleges could communicate more effectively with youth in the non-academy groups.

The lack of awareness was confirmed in the nationwide telephone survey, both in aided and unaided recall, and thus becomes the major finding in this study.

A foundational principle of marketing is to create awareness of the brand (Kotler, 1972). Strategic marketing planning includes methods and communication strategies to heighten visibility and brand awareness (Cochran & Hengstler, 1983; Kirp, 2003; Kotler & Murphy, 1981; Litten, 1980a). Marketing experts say that "consumption is a learning experience," and that it is important for organizations to get information into the hands of its prospective customers first so that the "pioneer brand may be viewed as competitively distinct" before "follow-on brands" come into the picture (Kerin, Varadarajan, & Peterson, 1992, p. 35). The first order of business for the NAD colleges is to implement strategies to create more awareness of the Adventist college system early on in the Adventist student's high-school experience.

It is interesting to note that this finding may be even more consequential since our population sample was perhaps skewed toward greater college awareness. The largest proportion of the names in the original sample was provided by the colleges from their inquiry pools and from their prospective student databases. If the sample is skewed toward college awareness, then the awareness rates are probably even lower than measured in the study.

In Table 13, showing unaided awareness levels by individual college, it is noted that the Non-Academy/Other College Group was most aware of Andrews, Loma Linda,

Southern Adventist, and Oakwood. An almost 10% gap exists before the next college emerges on the graph. With the exception of Southern Adventist, the other three are all General Conference-sponsored colleges, with world-church funding provided by the General Conference through special annual offering calls and mentions in church services around the world on specified weekends. This may explain why awareness levels among the Non-Academy/Other College Group were higher for those three colleges, which is a testament to systematic communication in the churches leading to higher awareness levels.

The Academy/SDA College group is the most aware. This is because the colleges in each union are in close symbiotic contact with the academies in their union. Thus, enrollment teams systematically recruit and market to this group multiple times each year, visiting their campuses and hosting them to open-house events on the college campuses. In addition, since 1999, the colleges have combined forces to host a College Fair tour to each of the more than 100 academy campuses in the NAD. This group experiences multiple *touch points* (points of contact and interaction between the student and the college) of communication and recruitment, thus increasing their awareness and knowledge of the program offerings and benefits of the Adventist colleges. The evaluation and frequency of touch points with various customer groups is a marketing strategy that assists firms in identifying each audience and measuring their effectiveness in relation to how they communicate with that audience. The management of these touch points is crucial (Sevier, 2002).

When asked about the magazine advertising placed by the colleges in their local union magazines, there was a lack of awareness among the focus group parents about the

advertising as well. The focus group observers behind the two-way mirrors took note that the church's regional magazines were perhaps not the most effective advertising medium with the Non-Academy/Other College and Non-Academy/SDA College groups, unless multiple exposures could be made and then followed up with companion marketing of another kind. Advertising requires consistency and multiple exposures over time to build brand awareness (Sevier, 2002), which is expensive, and no consistent advertising in any church magazine has showcased the variety of NAD colleges.

Advertising is typically placed by the SDA colleges on an individual basis, depending on how much advertising and marketing funding is provided by that particular college. While the union magazines have offered the colleges a way to purchase ads that can be inserted into all of the union papers, this is done very sparingly by individual colleges due to the high cost. Some colleges do not have an advertising budget that could cover such an expense. It should be noted that a back page ad on the *Adventist World*, which is delivered to most homes in America, costs well over $11,000 (*Adventist World*, 2006), and so only colleges with robust marketing budgets can afford to gain such brand exposure. And again, this is currently undertaken by individual colleges, so the effort is fragmented and sparse. The focus groups are a demonstration of the ineffectiveness of those advertisements. The church has made no sustained, systematic effort to communicate the entirety of the college system to the Adventist population, not through its publications or through the churches. A strategic marketing plan is needed.

Research Question 2: Motivators

Findings

The comprehensive list of findings for this question can be found at the end of chapter 4. I am providing a summary of findings here, as there were focus group findings as well as five questions on the survey regarding motivators, factors, attributes, and college characteristics.

There were large differences between groups for what factors are important and what are the main reasons for choosing a college.

To sum up the findings from the focus groups, plus the aided and unaided survey questions, the Non-Academy/Other College group values: affordability, close to home, high-quality education, best program in my major, and classes taught by professors and not teaching assistants.

For the Non-Academy/SDA College group, the top factors are: students sharing the same spiritual beliefs/values, high-quality education, scholarships, spiritual environment, and classes taught by professors and not teaching assistants.

For the Academy/SDA College group, the top factors are: spiritual environment, students sharing same spiritual beliefs and values, location, best program in my major, and classes taught by professors and not teaching assistants.

Discussion

This research question is a call to ascertain the difference in motivators, if any, for the Academy/SDA College group, who attended an academy, as contrasted to the Non-Academy/SDA College and Non-Academy/Other College groups, whose members did not attend an SDA academy. What influences them, and what is important to them?

As is pointed out in Chapman's (1981) conceptual model of college choice, there is a confluence of factors, attributes, and events that come together to form a student's college choice, so there is never just one factor that operates alone. This study contained a dizzying array of possible factors; respondents were probed regarding factors, attributes, characteristics, and perceptions from all angles. A pattern of differences clearly emerged between the students headed toward SDA colleges and the students headed to other colleges. For the Non-Academy/SDA College and the Academy/SDA College groups, there was a consistent importance placed on the spiritual environment and on friends and students sharing the same beliefs and values that was confirmed in the focus groups, plus the aided and unaided questions. These groups value what Adventist colleges offer.

On the other hand, the Non-Academy/Other College group values factors that could describe any private college: high-quality education, close to home, affordability, and classes taught by professors and not teaching assistants. These findings confirm what the 2002 study on higher education costs discovered, which was sponsored by the Institute for Higher Education Policy. Students going to public institutions were more likely to choose location or price as main reasons over their peers at private colleges (Cunningham, 2002). Missing was any mention, particularly unaided, of importance given to the spiritual dimension of a college. Also missing were any of the social networking factors among Adventist friends that were of high importance to the two other groups.

I believe that the reason the Non-Academy/Other College group does not value the spiritual environment factor is because of the complete disconnect with this group in

terms of awareness of Adventist colleges, and the lack of conversation with this group regarding the distinctiveness available on Adventist campuses. It is interesting to note, however, that when read a list of positioning statements in a later question, the Non-Academy/Other College group found the statement "Adventist colleges can offer you spiritual growth and spiritual opportunities that you simply can't find elsewhere" as making them *more interested* in attending an Adventist college. In fact, this group rated this statement at a higher aggregate percentage than the other two groups; this was by far the most motivating of the statements. Why did this group not value or mention the spiritual environment factor in earlier questions and then rate this statement highly toward the end of the survey? I believe the answer to this can be deduced from focus group observations.

In the focus groups, we watched a sort of transformation take place among the students headed toward non-Adventist colleges. As the topics progressed and the moderator began mentioning a spiritual environment and associating with friends of like beliefs, it was interesting to see the concept dawn on them. It was obvious they had never thought about this before, as they had probably dealt with their school environments as places where church topics and church friends do not exist. The moderator, although of Lutheran background, almost found himself in an evangelistic position concerning the benefits and offerings of an Adventist college. As the students were slowly "educated" and "exposed" to the attributes commonly associated with Adventist colleges, they began to engage with the moderator in a dialog about the value of a spiritual environment. The same sort of phenomenon happened in the parent groups. It was fascinating to observe, but it points out again the lack of familiarity these students have with the concept of a

college with a spiritual environment. It is possible that the same phenomena occurred in the telephone interviews. The average phone survey lasted 18 minutes, so the respondents were engaged in an in-depth way for quite some time, allowing them to perhaps progress in thinking about certain factors that were being probed. These observations and findings point out the value of education and communication as well as the value of recruiters seeking out these students to engage in conversations.

It has been written that for students with deep religious convictions, faith influences the way they view the world and can impact everything they do, including choosing a college (Muntz & Crabtree, 2006). As Christian students seek the right college, it is not surprising that they shop for a college that respects the things they find to be most important and takes what they believe seriously. A report of the Higher Education Research Institute (2005) notes that students in this generation have high levels of interest in spiritual things. Almost half of the students surveyed want colleges that allow them to express their personal spirituality. This level of interest in spiritual things can work to the advantage of a Christian college.

According to data published by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (2007), out of 4,253 higher education institutions in the United States in 2005, 892 are religiously affiliated. Two hundred of these are evangelical liberal arts colleges and Bible colleges. Muntz and Crabtree (2006) and Henderson (2003) report that while 65,000 new students each year choose Christian colleges, studies have found that there may be another 250,000 college-bound conservative Christian students who are choosing other college affiliations and who may be unaware that such Christian options exist. These students may find a good fit in a

Christian college setting, but these colleges are not being given serious consideration because of lack of awareness.

These statistics demonstrate that 78% of all Christian students do not attend Christian schools, a similar percentage as reported among Adventist college-bound youth. The authors also point out that a Christian college is not the right choice for every student. But for those "who seek or might benefit from a faith-based academic environment, from a highly personalized education, from a campus that affirms their evangelical religious traditions, a Christian liberal arts or Bible colleges may be an ideal fit" (Muntz & Crabtree, 2006, p. 20).

The Adventist Church and its colleges need to communicate with the Non-Academy/Other College group and allow them to weigh the value of Adventist colleges in their college-choice decisions.

Perceptual maps

The perceptual image maps in Figures 2, 3, and 4 deserve their own section in the discussion of this research question, as they provide the heart of the assessment of the differences between the three groups and another way of evaluating factors along with perceptions. The maps are matrixes, a form of multidimensional scaling, that demonstrate how the three respondent groups rank Adventist college attributes. These diagrams offer a visual grid to define attribute relationships and give us a taxonomy for classification.

The Academy/SDA College group and Non-Academy/SDA College group are very similar in that many of the attributes that rank as very important are aligned with high performance perceptions of Adventist colleges. The Academy/SDA College group is

the group that is most in sync with attributes of Adventist colleges. They have already been "sold," and the attributes all fall within the gray "sweet spot" band where student expectations meet with the importance ranking.

On this scale, the Academy/SDA College group holds SDA colleges in high regard for the following qualities:

1. Providing opportunities to support spiritual needs (this motivator ranked as the *most important* for the Academy/SDA College group and also ranked as the attribute with the highest performance, or *describes very well*).
2. Having professors rather than assistants teach classes.
3. Offering academic scholarships to high achievers.
4. Having a reputation for delivering a high-quality education.
5. Finding the means to make it affordable.
6. Offering plenty of on-campus activities.

The Non-Academy/SDA College group values the following characteristics of SDA colleges (note that the first three are the same as the group above):

1. Providing opportunities to support spiritual needs.
2. Having professors teach classes rather than assistants.
3. Offering academic scholarships to high achievers.
4. Professors know you by name. (This motivator is seen as much more important by the Non-Academy/SDA College group than the Academy/SDA College group, which is an indication of their desire to be personally connected to their professors. This attribute was also highly prized by the non-academy students in the focus

groups. They seemed to be aware that some classes at public universities could have 200-300 students in them.)

5. Finding the means to make it affordable.

These characteristics, which are valued highly by these two groups, should anchor communication to all prospective students.

The Non-Academy/Other College group is the most conspicuous in its differences in attribute valuation. Only a few attributes fell in the Star quadrant. And only one of those (classes taught by professors rather than by teaching assistants) fell into the gray band, and then just barely, meaning that most of the attributes of SDA colleges do not match this group's expectations. This could be because the group as a whole is not very aware of the SDA colleges or what they offer, since they have for the most part not been communicated with or recruited. Their parents are also not likely to have attended SDA colleges.

One attribute in the Opportunity quadrant is "helps you find the means to make it affordable to attend." Affordability is a critical influencer, and with this group of respondents, the SDA colleges are not delivering on perceptions. The Non-Academy/Other College group considers this the most important attribute, rated by 85.8% of the Non-Academy/Other College group students as *very important* on this scale, so communicating financial options is a vital recruitment strategy.

All attributes for the Non-Academy/Other College group show room for improvement. There is definitely an opportunity to increase awareness and knowledge among students in the Non-Academy/Other College group.

The marketing myth: Reputation for high-quality education

It is often heard in conversations among college faculty that the reason the non-academy students do not choose Adventist colleges is because they do not perceive the colleges to be of good enough academic quality. This study appears to have soundly repudiated that myth. All three groups of prospective students rated the Adventist colleges highly in terms of perceptions of academic excellence and reputation. In fact, the *reputation for high-quality education* attribute scored almost the same across the three groups—as highly important, but also with good performance by the colleges.

Faculty are often heard to say, "We need to really market how great our academic excellence is because that will draw in more students." The attribute *reputation for high quality education*, while important as a foundation (maintenance of academic excellence and strong programs), is not a marketing differentiator among groups for Adventist colleges. This came out clearly in the focus groups. Students are not choosing Adventist colleges for their excellent academic programs (which they rank as important and they also perceive the colleges to have); instead they are choosing SDA colleges over public universities because of the differentiators involved with spiritual growth opportunities, personal attention from caring faculty, and lifelong friendships with students holding similar beliefs and values (K. Menk, SRP researcher, personal communication, September 2005). These are the differentiators that Adventist colleges must market. The differentiators, however, work properly only as long as academic excellence is maintained as a foundation. It is possible to highlight the excellent academics through an attribute all groups find important—the personal attention from faculty. Marketers and

recruiters may be able to use faculty connectedness to emphasize the quality learning environment with engaged faculty and students at Adventist colleges.

Research Question 3: Barriers

Findings

Focus group students not going to SDA colleges identified the following barriers to college choice: lifestyle restrictions (mandatory worships, jewelry rules, dress code rules, diet restrictions), a strict or opinionated environment, no legitimate sports programs, cost, and a desire to attend a big-name school.

Focus group students headed to SDA colleges cited different barriers: distance from home, the cost, and the cold weather in one region.

There is a significant difference ($p<.05$) in the level that the student groups are being recruited by the colleges: Non-Academy/Other College group 22.6%; Non-Academy/ SDA College group 44.8%; Academy/SDA College group 71.0%.

Barriers cited by students who applied but who do not plan to attend, and students who did not apply: cost, lack of scholarships, location too far away, and lack of knowledge about the colleges. A significantly higher proportion ($p<.05$) of the Non-Academy/Other College students marked *don't know* and *does not describe* on the Adventist college attributes, demonstrating a lack of knowledge.

Discussion

The two main barriers to enrollment coincide with the finding in Research Question 1 regarding the significant ($p<.05$) lack of awareness of Adventist colleges. The corollaries to that finding surface here in Research Question 3 as a significant

($p<.05$) lack of knowledge about Adventist colleges and a significant ($p<.05$) lack of recruitment contact. Students are more likely to attend if they are actively recruited and have knowledge about certain colleges. Unless the youth in the Non-Academy/Other College group and the Non-Academy/SDA College group are approached by Adventist colleges, additional enrollment from these groups cannot be expected.

Secondary barriers are cost, lack of scholarships, and the distance from home. There is a particular perception of high cost and inadequate financial help within the Non-Academy/Other College group. Cost surfaces enough times in this study to make affordability a major message in every communication about an Adventist college. These barriers are similar to Hunt's (1996) discovery of the reasons parents chose not to send their children to boarding academies even after they had applied and been accepted. The reasons were cost and location.

College costs are of general concern right now in the public's eyes, with a considerable amount of press dedicated to the topic. Consider excerpts from the *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, "Financial Barriers Will Keep Millions From College, Eroding Nation's Competitiveness, Panel Says," published September 22, 2006:

> Millions of high-school graduates from low- and moderate-income families who planned and prepared for college will continue to lose access to higher education because of financial strains, according to a report released by a committee that advises Congress and the U.S. Education Department.
>
> The report warns that financial barriers are disrupting other efforts to increase college enrollment, such as improved academic preparation, expanded early intervention, increased outreach to students, and simplified student-aid forms and processes.
>
> According to the report, lowering financial barriers is necessary to increase the number of students from low- and moderate-income families who earn bachelor's degrees. (Porter, 2006, p. A25)

The inability to afford a private college education may represent a serious obstacle to enrollment in coming years. Colleges must be creative with communicating affordability and building perceived value.

The barriers discussed in the focus groups regarding lifestyle restrictions and opinionated environments mirror the Maguire Associates study in 2001 among 70 Christian colleges who were members of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities. Barriers to attendance in that study included concerns about "closed-mindedness" and strict rules. However, it is important to note that colleges that provide a spiritual environment and are connected to particular denominations often require chapel attendance and other rules considered "strict" as a way of showing distinctiveness and fostering a different environment than is found on the campuses of public colleges. Marsden (1994), Burtchaell (1998), and Benne (2001) demonstrate collectively that it is in the best interest of a denominational college to retain the distinctiveness of chapels, worships, and lifestyle requirements. Without them, the college becomes like any other college and loses its faith-based distinctiveness.

A modern case in point of a large, successful faith-based college that maintains its faith vibrancy and close connection with its Churches of Christ roots is Abilene Christian University in Texas. This 4,800-student college requires *daily* chapel attendance that "engages students, staff and faculty in Christian community through worship and celebration" (Abilene Christian University, 2007, p. 1). Sometimes their chapel is scheduled in the 6,000-seat Moody Coliseum for a combined community experience, while at other times the Abilene Christian students break out into groups around campus for intentional small-group spiritual formation. The university hosts a variety of chapel

experiences from which students may pick, including Campus Conversations, Departmental Chapel, Connection Groups, Come As You Are, Praise and Worship, and Faith in Action chapels (which involve outreach activities).

While complaining among Adventist students regarding requirements and restrictions in relation to religious services and practices is probably always going to occur, these things must be discussed in honesty and openness with the Adventist youth who question them year after year. However, the dialog should not guide administrators to change the intentional faith focus of required chapels and lifestyle curtailments on their campuses. This is a barrier that can only be overcome through a loving attitude and a graceful spirit exhibited by employees at each college, as well as a conversation with prospective students about the many benefits of an Adventist education, which outweigh these perceptions and concerns.

Research Question 4: Marketing Messages

Findings

Ten positioning statements were tested in the focus groups, and eight positioning statements were tested in the telephone surveys. Among all groups, both in the focus groups and in the telephone surveys, the top three messages that were the most motivating and the most likely to increase interest were:

1. "Adventist colleges can offer you spiritual growth and spiritual opportunities that you simply can't find elsewhere."

2. "At Adventist colleges you have easy access to professors who understand the value of providing personal attention to each student."

3. "At Adventist colleges you can develop lifelong friendships and relationships with students who share similar Christian beliefs and spiritual values."

Discussion

It is interesting that the three top messages are very similar to Hunt's (1996) top factors that families consider most important when sending students to Adventist boarding academies: a spiritual environment, concerned and caring teachers, safety and school climate.

It is also interesting to note the consistency of these top three choices with the top factors that motivate the Adventist college-bound youth from research question 2. The spiritual environment surfaces again as a very important factor; it is found in two of the positioning statements, in that a spiritual environment means both a campus that provides opportunities for spiritual growth, and a campus populated by friends and peers holding the same beliefs and values. The importance of personal attention from and close contact with caring, believing faculty, which is a testimony to excellent teaching and a superior learning environment, is also found in one of the top statements, as well as in the factors discovered to be critically important in research question 2.

Key messages and hallmark themes have been used with great success among many college consortia (CIC, n.d.). Hallmark themes provide a "pulpit for greater visibility" (Maguire Associates, 2001, p. 19). Key messages should be consistently transmitted to prospective students by all communication efforts (Engledow & Anderson, 1978). In addition, an emphasis on a clear mission, vision, and values is the key to effective marketing and differentiation (Lauer, 2002). To increase interest among the

non-academy students, compelling positioning messages should be used that resonate with all Adventist youth.

These three themes should be the "key messages" of any communication campaign developed to target Adventist college-bound youth. These statements resonate the best with prospective students in all three groups. In addition, the concept of affordability should appear in every communication campaign along with the three key messages, based on findings from the other research questions.

Research Question 5: Effective Ways to Communicate

Findings

The groups have marked differences in the best methods of communication, discovered through aided and unaided survey questions:

1. Non-Academy/Other College: church events, church pastor, college mailings, college e-mails, college fairs

2. Non-Academy/SDA College: church events, church pastor, college mailings, college fairs

3. Academy/SDA College: college fairs at the academies, academy counselors, college recruiters.

Discussion

The two non-academy groups preferred the same communication methods, with both groups considering the church as the best place to receive information. The church appears to be the focal point for students not attending Adventist academies because the church service, church events, and church gatherings become the place where

socialization among Adventist peers, mentors, and friends takes place for these groups. The local church is the central hub of Adventism for these students, and therefore, the most important way of receiving information about Adventist colleges.

This is a critical finding with many practical implications. To reach the non-academy youth, communication must go through the church as a central resource point. Colleges need to consider the church pastors as a vital resource in helping them communicate with this target audience.

Specific recommendations from this finding might include the college recruiters, along with musical groups, ministry teams, and gifted speakers, planning visits to churches as well as to youth rallies and youth meetings already being hosted by the churches and conferences. College information sessions and receptions could be held in the evenings along with activities for the youth. Combined college fairs targeted at geographic areas populated by the non-academy youth should be considered. College alumni would also be instrumental in helping to work with local churches and could assist with announcements from the podium, putting announcements in the church bulletins, hanging posters, and keeping literature available.

Because of the pastors' importance as a communication channel for non-academy youth, colleges and the NAD Department of Education should devote special effort at keeping pastors informed, whether through newsletters, listserves, or advertising in *Ministry* magazine.

In contrast, for the Academy/SDA College group, college fairs at the academies were mentioned as the best way by the majority of the students, confirming the effectiveness and success of this recruiting method. This was the highest mention of any

method by any group. The NAD colleges have operated college fairs on every academy campus since 1999, boosting awareness of all NAD colleges.

The least popular communication method across all groups was e-mail. In the focus groups as well, Adventist students did not value e-mail messages highly; many said they deleted them routinely and did not like "spam."

College mailings scored highly among all groups, confirming the desire of all students to receive information in the mail. Research conducted by Hossler et al. (1999) demonstrates that a college's direct marketing activities do have an effect on college choice.

Communication methods such as MySpace, Facebook, podcasting, chats, blogging, instant messaging, text messaging, YouTube, and advertising were not tested in this study. These omissions could perhaps be considered limitations of the study, although research indicates that advertising is not as effective or as persuasive as parents, older siblings, friends, scholarships, institutional reputation, location, sports, high-school counselors, and college visits in college choice (Tucciarone, 2007).

Limitations

Several additional limitations presented themselves during the study and during the data analysis. It was noted that the population sample may have skewed the respondents with more awareness of the Adventist colleges than what is actually present in the population. Because it was difficult to find and identify non-academy youth, the colleges donated their databases of inquirers and prospective students, so these participants may have more knowledge of the SDA colleges than the normal prospective student. This makes the finding of extremely low awareness even more surprising.

Another limitation could be the dominance of youth from the West among the respondents. This occurred because the Adventist colleges in the West contributed larger pools of names than the colleges in the East.

The majority of the respondents being from minority ethnicities is perhaps another limitation, although it is difficult to say since it is not known whether the Adventist youth population as a whole is comprised of a majority of minority ethnicities. If minorities are the majority, then we have an oxymoron of sorts in our youth population.

A limitation on the household income finding would be the refusal/don't know response from up to 40% of each of the groups which may skew the outcome.

The focus groups were conducted in only two cities, Los Angeles and Nashville, which presents a limitation of breadth of opinion. The views of students in these cities do not probably represent the opinions of those in New York, for example, or those in Nebraska. Under ideal conditions, focus groups would have been conducted in more cities to reflect the diversity of thought and opinion among Adventists across the country.

There also exist limitations in the factors and attributes chosen for testing. One factor cropping up in recent literature that was not tested was *safety of the campus*. In the aftermath of violence and tragedy on college campuses, including the shooting incident at Virginia Tech in the summer of 2007 that claimed more than 30 lives, colleges realize that prospective students and families may reconsider attending or even withdraw their applications from colleges connected with these sorts of crises (Kelsay, 2007). In a study involving interviews with admissions personnel and senior administrators from three institutions involved in a crisis, college-choice factors important to their incoming

students were reported by these representatives. Across all sites, safety was ranked as the fourth most important college-choice factor behind academics, cost, and location (Kelsay, 2007).

A limitation may also exist in the kinds of communication methods tested. The following communication venues, many of which have become extremely popular among students in the last 5 years, were not tested: social networking websites (such as MySpace and Facebook), podcasting, chats, blogging, instant messaging, text messaging, YouTube, college-sponsored websites, and internet advertising.

Conclusions

The most significant finding and conclusion is the lack of awareness about the Adventist college options among Adventist youth who are not attending academies. Because of this lack of awareness, there is a lack of knowledge regarding the offerings and benefits of SDA colleges.

The lack of attention given to students not attending academies is another landmark finding. The colleges as a whole are not recruiting well among the Non-Academy/Other College and Non-Academy/SDA College groups. Three-quarters of the students in these two groups had no recruiting contact from an SDA college. The students in these two groups consider their local church as a primary venue for communication and recruitment.

Another critical finding is the importance of the spiritual environment as a college characteristic that is differentiating and meaningful to Seventh-day Adventist young people. The opportunity to practice their Adventist faith and grow spiritually in a place where friends and faculty share their beliefs is an important college-choice factor that

makes the majority of the youth interviewed in this study more interested in an Adventist college.

The importance and significance of this study is multifold. The study provides the enrollment management teams of the 15 NAD colleges with very practical and useful recruiting and marketing methodologies and techniques, as well as key communication messages, which can be used to reach the Non-Academy/Other College and Non-Academy/SDA College groups. These findings can provide the research base to create a solid marketing plan. The study also provides the church with some reasons as to why SDA enrollment in the colleges is declining and shows the way forward to reach more SDA young people, particularly those not attending Adventist secondary schools, by providing more touch points in communication and messaging.

Based on historical narrative evidence provided by Marsden (1994), Burtchaell (1998), and Benne (2001), it has been demonstrated that when colleges founded by a denomination lose an enrolled strategic base of young people of the founding faith, it is often difficult to resist the slide toward generalization and a loss of distinctiveness, including pressures to move away from required chapels, worships, and lifestyle restrictions. While the colleges in North America, in aggregate, have a very healthy strategic base of 67.8% Adventist enrollment, individual colleges may have more concerns, and the lack of awareness that was discovered in this study provides some cautions regarding the future stability of the base. More important may be the fact that only around 25% of college-bound youth choose to continue their education at an Adventist college, and that some colleges are struggling to grow their enrollment.

It will take a combined effort of leadership from AACU and leadership from the NAD to fully "reach" the non-academy youth and enable them to at least explore the Adventist college-choice options and see if they are a good fit.

Recommendations for Practice and Future Research

Chapman's (1981) college-choice model suggests three categories of "external influences" that play an important role in the college-choice decision. Each of these categories can be impacted by the strategic use of the findings of this study.

The first of Chapman's (1981) categories of influences is "significant persons" such as friends, parents, church pastors, and church congregations. The Adventist colleges and the Adventist Church have not capitalized on the role of the church in creating influencers for the college; instead, they have assumed that knowledge about the colleges is commonly known. Sadly, it is not. Improved communication with families and churches is needed.

The second category of influence is "college characteristics" and attributes. We now know which characteristics are most motivating and which are identified as most important. Colleges need to use these identified factors to help shape new marketing and communication strategies.

Chapman's (1981) third category of external influences is "college efforts to communicate with students." This study identifies preferred communication methodologies for each group of students, as well as the key messages that resonate across all groups.

A fundamental recommendation is that Seventh-day Adventist colleges, in partnership with the NAD Department of Education, need to create a comprehensive,

integrated, and coordinating marketing plan for AACU that is based on the three Chapman (1981) categories to increase awareness and touch points for students in the Non-Academy/Other College and Non-Academy/SDA College groups who are not attending Seventh-day Adventist academies. If students are not aware of SDA colleges and do not know what they are all about, the colleges will not be included in their choice set (Sevier, 2002).

An ideal marketing plan would include active college recruiting at the church level and at youth meetings where students in the Non-Academy/Other College and Non-Academy/SDA College groups may be found. College fairs held at the church or regional level, so that both students and parents can attend—especially families of youth not attending academies—would be a good strategy, as well as mailings and calls from college recruiters.

In addition, as part of the plan, it is recommended that the NAD colleges cooperate on common *branding* strategies for the college consortium. Gone should be the days when individual colleges battle it out for name recognition and try to steal academy students from each other's territory. The current smattering of eclectic, individual strategies, with some colleges funded heavily and others funded sparingly, will not be able to reach and target the non-academy groups effectively. Like other denominational college consortia that have already gone down this road (the Lutheran, Catholic, and Churches of Christ college associations), the Adventists will be more effective and more successful at influencing non-academy students to enroll in Adventist colleges if they will market themselves together and brand themselves together as a coordinated system of colleges.

The core of a brand identity strategy is knowing which attributes and factors of the brand have the most impact (Keller, 2001). A brand differentiates based on what makes it—in this case, a group of colleges—unique (Burge & Gunther, 2003). This study has isolated key attributes and factors, as well as key messages for use in an integrated branding approach to reach the non-academy groups. An integrated branding and marketing strategy should include a common website, a common application, joint advertising, joint publicity, joint mailings, joint college fairs, and joint calling campaigns. Churches should be supplied with ample materials for the college consortia brand, including posters, bulletin inserts, literature, and a way to request that a college fair come to their church area.

In addition, it is recommended that the Adventist Church, from its central location at the North American Division, work together with the colleges to increase visibility and assist with driving the now-missing knowledge about the higher education system into the local churches on a systematic basis. The college consortium of AACU, while very forward thinking, needs the backing of the church itself and needs visionary leaders who are thinking of ways to communicate with all pastors, through newsletters, listserves, regular mailings, and at pastors' meetings, the opportunities available to their parishioners in terms of Adventist higher education. It should not be incumbent totally on the colleges to advertise the system widely; the NAD Department of Education should partner with the college consortium to create coordinated joint advertising to appear regularly in all church and union publications. An ideal marketing plan would include development of church packs, with posters and bulletin inserts, that would be available for ordering by web, and systematically distributed.

The college-choice process is complex and multi-staged, according to Hossler et al. (1989); therefore, attention needs to be given to a variety of marketing and communication messages and methods, made available to youth and their important influencers from perhaps the eighth grade up to the years of high school.

In the three-stage college-choice model of Hossler and Gallagher (1987), the stage referred to as "search" means that students collect information about various colleges over a period of time and then eventually form their "consideration set." Chapman's (1981) model is likewise longitudinal, and the factors interplay over a span of time. The marketing of SDA colleges needs to begin early in the academy and high-school years, and continue until graduation. Adventist colleges should be in the "consideration sets" of all Adventist youth.

Another recommendation for the plan is the identification and collection of contact information of non-academy students. These students should be put on an active communication track with viewbooks, literature, telephone calls, and encouragements to visit the college campuses. This study discovered a major barrier in the ability to identify and locate names, addresses, and phone numbers of the non-academy students. The church has no centralized youth database, which severely handicaps successful communication with SDA youth not enrolled in the academies. Here is where a partnership with the church is essential. As the nationwide church membership database eAdventist is built, college access to contact information for the SDA youth is imperative so that successful communication can occur. If SDA students are unaware of SDA college choices, they will not enroll in SDA schools.

The coordinated use of key messages and communications that differentiate SDA colleges from public colleges and universities is also imperative. The key messages identified by this research study should anchor all communication materials:

1. Spiritual growth opportunities
2. Personal attention from professors (e.g., *small class size, interaction with professors instead of teaching assistants, professors get to know you by name,* and *a supportive environment*)
3. Lifelong friendships with students of similar values and beliefs.

In addition to these three key messages, the affordability and value received at Adventist colleges must be emphasized in order to overcome the perceptions of high cost and price barriers. Financing plans and choices must be explained carefully, and the creative delivery of financial aid and scholarship options must be studied. The church and the AACU collaborative group may want to designate an affordability task force to consider the issue of financing the cost of a private Adventist education.

2008 Progress Report on AACU Marketing

Since the data for this study were collected in the summer of 2005 and initially reviewed by the Adventist Enrollment Association and the Joint Marketing Committee, funding by the Association of Adventist Colleges and Universities has allowed the following strategies to go forward:

1. A joint website, www.adventistcolleges.org, went live in February 2007.
2. A common application form for all NAD colleges has been developed and will go live on the website soon.

3. With the help of Plattform Higher Education, a full-service ad agency in Kansas, joint mailings have been sent beginning in 2005, both in the fall and in the spring, to non-academy youth whose names are purchased from various list companies. The mailing pieces have a joint branding approach, with all NAD colleges listed. The mailings drive the reader to a website that records their interest in the college(s) of their choice, and the student's contact information is sent to the colleges for follow-up.

4. Plattform also calls non-academy youth, under the auspices of the Association for Adventist Colleges and Universities, and asks if they would like more information from the college(s) of their choice. A total of 300 hours in the fall and spring are utilized for this calling campaign, and the contact information of interested students is sent to the colleges for follow-up.

5. In an effort to collect the names of the non-academy youth across the country, an Adventist company was hired to contact all churches in North America and build a database. This proved very difficult and was fraught with major obstacles. Instead, permission has been granted, as voted at the Annual Council Meeting in November 2007, for the colleges to use the database of eAdventist to find the names and contact information of church youth. To grant access, each of the 58 conference presidents or secretaries must sign a permission document. The names will be collected twice a year from eAdventist and sent straight to Plattform for use in the joint mailings.

6. To extend the concept of the College Fair circuit that is scheduled at every academy in North America, a series of evening college fairs at churches and youth events is currently being beta-tested in major metropolitan areas with concentrations of Adventist youth.

While many strategies are already being implemented and/or tested as a result of the data collected in 2005, these steps are only a small, scattered beginning in reaching the non-academy youth, and there is much, much more to be done. A comprehensive marketing plan and strategy developed in coordination with the colleges and the Church's NAD Department of Education is still lacking; therefore, current efforts are sporadic.

Future Research

Opportunities for future research include updating perceptions among the three groups of SDA students in several years to see if awareness levels are increasing. There may be new issues to address, or new key messages may arise as important. It is important to base branding and marketing strategy on solid research. Marketers and plan strategists should not fall into the trap of regarding personal opinions or several anecdotal incidents as knowledge, or intuition as skill (Marconi, 2002).

Comparative outcomes research among alumni would be another valuable research study to conduct, similar to what the Lutherans and the CIC have done (Hardwick-Day, 2005). Such a study would compare the outcomes of Adventists who graduated from Adventist colleges with Adventists who graduated from public universities. The resulting findings may help build the case for the value of an Adventist college education.

The fourth group of Adventist young people in this study, the Academy/Other Colleges group, which was eliminated from consideration for the final analyses, may be another group that could be studied in future research. This group was too small to draw conclusions from, as no minimum was established for this group and no effort made for the collection of data from them for the purpose of the study. However, significant

interest in this group of academy students was expressed by various college administrators in later stages of this research. These leaders wonder why, with all the support and nurture from the academies and with all the knowledge of the Adventist college system, would this group not want to continue on with an education from an Adventist college. Some felt that with more data on this group, colleges could effectively recruit more of them to stay with the Adventist educational system.

Lastly, the continued voluntary collaboration of the Adventist Enrollment Association and the Association of Adventist Colleges and Universities is to be commended, particularly the work of the volunteer enrollment managers in the hard-working Joint Marketing Committee as it begins to lay the groundwork for joint communication methods and strategies. Since this work is largely volunteer, it will be difficult to sustain at this level. It is recommended that a position be funded so that full-time emphasis and proper branding and marketing coordination continues. For the colleges and the Adventist Church, there is too much at stake to leave this important work to volunteers who have busy full-time jobs of their own.

As N. Clifford Sorensen (2002) wrote in the *Journal of Adventist Education* regarding the NAD colleges collaborating together on various projects, "We can surely praise what occurred serendipitously . . . with respect to joint endeavors. However, today's environment requires a more comprehensive and coordinated approach" (p. 49). Sorensen calls for committing the proper human and monetary resources to the collaborative process to make it work, and to make it stick.

> Given our long history of vigorous and competitive individuality, successful cooperation will require both a carefully crafted strategy and the identification of mutual benefits within partnership agreements. We must define outcomes and expectations and commit the necessary human and monetary resources to this

> process, which cannot be viewed as a short-term or one-time quick fix operation. In summary, many factors will impede or stall consortium efforts. Most if not all can be overcome by dedicated and unrelenting effort. (Sorensen, 2002, p. 50)

It is time for the Adventist Church and the Adventist colleges to work together as a system, in a systematic way, to communicate the entirety of offerings for higher education among all church constituents. Each Adventist young person in North America should have the opportunity to consider all of the Adventist colleges to see if one might be a good fit. It is only in this way that the church will stabilize the future of Adventist higher education in North America and continue to provide a healthy strategic base of Adventist young people for each institution, thus continuing the strong connection at each college to the founding heritage of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Well-educated youth are the future leaders of the church, and it is time to devote resources and attention to crafting solutions to the problems unearthed in this research study.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

REQUEST FOR LISTS FOR FOCUS GROUPS, SENT TO COLLEGES

List Request (requested fields for file)

- Student name
- Parent name
- College source (name of college that is generating the list)
- Permanent address (including street, city, and ZIP)
- Home phone number
- High school name
    - SDA academy or non-academy
- Year of graduation
- SDA college planning to attend (for individuals who are planning to attend an SDA college)
- High school GPA
- ACT/SAT scores
- Applied for aid (Y/N)
- Received aid (Y/N)
- Ethnicity
- Gender

Please sort the lists by (if known):

1. SDA academy HS grads planning to attend an SDA college
2. SDA non-academy HS grads planning to attend an SDA college (likely public school or home school grads)
3. SDA non-academy HS grads attending a non-SDA college
4. Parents of these same segments of students

Nashville ZIP Codes (below are the ZIP codes for the Nashville recruiting area)

37013 Antioch	37087 Madison	37208 Nashville
37014 Arrington	37115 Mt. Juliet	37209 Nashville
37027 Brentwood	37122 Murfreesboro	37210 Nashville
37046 College Grove	37130 Nolensville	37211 Nashville
37062 Fairview	37135 Old Hickory	37212 Nashville
37064 Franklin	37138 Smyrna	37213 Nashville
37065 Franklin	37167 Thompson Station	37214 Nashville
37066 Gallatin	37179 Whites Creek	37215 Green Hills
37072 Goodlettsville	37189 Nashville	37216 Nashville
37075 Hendersonville	37203 Nashville	37217 Nashville
37076 Hermitage	37204 Nashville	37218 Nashville
37077 Hendersonville	37205 Belle Meade	37219 Nashville
37080 La Vergne	37206 Nashville	37220 Oak Hill
37086 Lebanon	37207 Nashville	37221 Bellevue

Sherman Oaks, CA ZIP Codes (ZIP codes for Sherman Oaks recruiting area)

City	State	County	ZIP Code
Arleta	CA	Los Angeles	91331, 91334
Bel Air Estates	CA	Los Angeles	90077
Bell Canyon	CA	Los Angeles	91307
Beverly Glen	CA	Los Angeles	90210
Beverly Hills	CA	Los Angeles	90209-90213
Brentwood	CA	Los Angeles	94513
Burbank	CA	Los Angeles	91501-91510, 91521-91523, 91526
Calabasas	CA	Los Angeles	91302, 91372
Canoga Park	CA	Los Angeles	91303-91309
Canyon Country	CA	Los Angeles	91351, 91386, 91387
Century City	CA	Los Angeles	90067
Chatsworth	CA	Los Angeles	91311-91313
Encino	CA	Los Angeles	91416, 91426, 91436
Granada Hills	CA	Los Angeles	91344, 91374, 91394
Hidden Hills	CA	Los Angeles	91302
Hollywood	CA	Los Angeles	90027, 90028, 90038, 90068, 90078
Lake View Terrace	CA	Los Angeles	91342
Los Angeles	CA	Los Angeles	90001-90103, 90174, 90185, 90189
Los Feliz	CA	Los Angeles	90027
Mission Hills	CA	Los Angeles	91345, 91346, 91395
Newhall	CA	Los Angeles	91321, 91322
North Hills	CA	Los Angeles	91343, 91393
North Hollywood	CA	Los Angeles	91601-91612, 91614-91618
Northridge	CA	Los Angeles	91324-91330
Pacoima	CA	Los Angeles	91331-91334
Panorama City	CA	Los Angeles	91402, 92412
Porter Ranch	CA	Los Angeles	91326
Reseda	Ca	Los Angeles	91335

City	State	County	ZIP Code
San Fernando	CA	Los Angeles	91340-91341
Santa Clarita	CA	Los Angeles	91301, 91322, 91350-91355, 91380-91383, 91390
Santa Monica	CA	Los Angeles	90401, 90411
Sherman Oaks	CA	Los Angeles	91401, 91403, 91411, 91413, 91423, 91495
Stevenson Ranch	CA	Los Angeles	91381
Studio City	CA	Los Angeles	91602, 91604, 91607, 91614
Sun Valley	CA	Los Angeles	91352, 91353
Sylmar	CA	Los Angeles	91321, 91342, 91392
Tarzana	CA	Los Angeles	91335, 91356, 91357
Toluca Lake	CA	Los Angeles	91602, 91610
Tujunga	CA	Los Angeles	91042, 91043
Topanga	CA	Los Angeles	90290
Universal City	CA	Los Angeles	91608
Valencia	CA	Los Angeles	91354, 91355, 91380, 91385
Valley Village	CA	Los Angeles	91388, 91401, 91404-91411, 91423, 91426, 91436, 91470, 91482, 91496, 91497, 91499, 91607, 91617
West Hills	CA	Los Angeles	91304, 91307, 91308
West Hollywood	CA	Los Angeles	90038, 90046, 90048, 90069
West Los Angeles	CA	Los Angeles	90025
Westlake Village	CA	Ventura	91359, 91361, 91363
Westwood	CA	Los Angeles	96137
Winnetka	CA	Los Angeles	91306, 91396

APPENDIX B

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT SCREENER

Strategic Resource Partners LLC
4165 Shoreline Drive #226
Spring Park, MN 55384
Tel. 952-471-0772
Fax: 952-471-0808

SDA Focus Groups
Project #5018
2005

STUDENT SCREENER

QUALITY CONTROL

Edited By:_____

Mon/Val By:_____

CONFIRMATION

Int:_____

Outcome:_____

Applied for Financial Aid

Yes.....1

No.....2

GENDER

Male (5-6 to show per group).....1

Female (5-6 to show per group).....2

Nashville—Monday, July 18th

Group 1 (12:00p):

Attended SDA academy (Q3)/Attending SDA college (Q7).....1

Group 2 (2:00p):

Attended public HS or home-schooled/Attending SDA college.....2

Group 3 (4:30p):

Attended public HS or home-schooled/Attending "Other" college.....3

Sherman Oaks—Wednesday, July 20th

Group 1 (12:00p):

Attended SDA academy (Q3)/Attending SDA college (Q7).....1

Group 2 (2:00p):

Attended public HS or home-schooled/Attending SDA college.....2

Group 3 (4:30p):

Attended public HS or home-schooled/Attending "Other" college.....3

RESPONDENT NAME: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

INTERVIEWER: _____ DATE: _____

ASK TO SPEAK TO NAME ON LIST

Hello, I'm (NAME) with (INSERT COMPANY), a local marketing research firm. Today we are doing a brief survey regarding college perceptions and would like to include your opinions. I assure you I am not trying to sell you anything, and the survey should take no longer than five minutes. May I continue? (IF "NO," TERMINATE AND TALLY.)

1. First of all, we need to speak to individuals in various occupations. Do you, or does anyone in your household, work for any college or a company that provides consulting services to colleges?

   Yes ..... 1 → TERMINATE/TALLY

   No 2

2. Are you planning on attending college as a freshman this fall? (RECORD BELOW.)

   Yes 1

   No ..... 2 → TERMINATE/TALLY

   REFUSED ..... X → TERMINATE/TALLY

3. Which of the following best describes your high school education? (READ LIST. RECORD ONE MENTION ONLY)

   Attended a public high school .. 1 → MAY QUALIFY FOR GROUP 2 OR 3

   Attended a private high school or academy ..... 2 → MAY QUALIFY FOR GROUP1

   Was home schooled ..... 3 → MAY QUALIFY FOR GROUP 2 OR 3

   SKIP TO QUESTION 5

   REFUSED ..... X → TERMINATE/TALLY

4. From which high school/academy did you recently graduate? (DO NOT READ LIST. RECORD BELOW.)

   _____

   REFUSED X

   LIST OF AREA ACADEMIES

5. How would you describe your **religious affiliation,** if any? (RECORD BELOW)

   _____ ..... ( ) →

   None 0
   Don't know X
   Refused ..... Y

   MUST SAY SDA (SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST) TO CONTINUE. IF NOT,

Now, I have a few questions about your college decision process.

6. What colleges did you apply to attend? (DNRL. RECORD ALL MENTIONS BELOW.)

7. What college are you planning to attend this fall? (DNRL. RECORD BELOW. ONE MENTION ONLY)

	Q.6	Q.7
SDA Colleges:		
Adventist Colleges Abroad	1	1
Andrews University	2	2
Atlantic Union College	3	3
Canadian University College	4	4
Columbia Union College	5	5
Florida Hospital College of Health Sciences	6	6
Griggs University	7	7
Kettering College of Medical Arts	8	8
La Sierra University	9	9
Loma Linda University	10	10
Mission College	11	11
Oakwood College	12	12
Pacific Union College	13	13
Southern Adventist University	14	14
Southwestern Adventist University	15	15
Union College	16	16
Walla Walla College	17	17
Other Colleges/Universities:		
_____	( )	( )
_____	( )	( )
_____	( )	( )
_____	( )	( )
DON'T KNOW/RF	x	x →T & T

MUST MENTION ONE OF THE SDA COLLEGES AT Q7 TO QUALIFY FOR **GROUP 1 OR GROUP**

MUST MENTION "OTHER" COLLEGE OR UNIVER-SITY AT Q7 TO QUALIFY FOR **GROUP 3**

Summary of Qualifications:
Group 1: SDA academy at Q4 and SDA College (punch 1-17) at Q7
Group 2: Public or home-schooled (punch 1 or 3) at Q3 and SDA College (punch 1-17) at Q7
Group 3: Public or home-schooled (punch 1 or 3) at Q3 and "Other" College at Q7

8. Did you apply for any need-based financial aid? (RECORD BELOW.)

Yes 1

No..... 2

REFUSED..... X

OBTAIN GOOD MIX OF INDIVIDUALS WHO DID/DIDN'T APPLY FOR AID IN EACH GROUP

9. What is your anticipated major? (RECORD BELOW. "DON'T KNOW/UNDECIDED" IS ACCEPTABLE.)

10. What was most important to you in deciding which college to attend? (RECORD BELOW)

_____

_____

_____

IF "DON'T KNOW," OR NOT ARTICULATE, TERMINATE AND TALLY.

11. Are you comfortable expressing your opinions within a group of students your age whom you may not know?

Yes..... 1

No..... 2 ⇒ TERMINATE AND TALLY

12. Which of the following best describes your ethnic background? (READ LIST)

Caucasian 1

African American/Black 2

Hispanic/Latino..... 3

Asian..... 4

Pacific Islander..... 5

American Indian 6

Other—(SPECIFY):..... ( )

_____

13. RECORD GENDER:

Male.....1 ⇒ NEED 5-6 TO SHOW PER GROUP

Female.....2 ⇒ NEED 5-6 TO SHOW PER GROUP

TRY FOR 50/50 MIX

INVITATION

We frequently conduct informal group discussions with students like you to explore perceptions and attitudes about various college topics. Most participants find these group discussions to be extremely interesting and enjoyable.

On (DATE/TIME) we are hosting a group discussion with college-bound students like you. The discussion will be held at our offices and will last approximately two hours. In addition, upon completion of the group, you will be paid ($) for your time and participation. (Refreshments/Dinner) will be served. No sales are involved in these discussions.

14. Can we count on you to attend?

Yes.....1

No .....2 →RECORD REASON ON FRONT PAGE

Maybe 3

OBTAIN INFORMATION ON FIRST TWO PAGES. VERIFY RESPONDENT'S HOME PHONE NUMBER, ADDRESS, CITY AND ZIP.

Your participation is very important to us. If for some reason a scheduling conflict should occur, please call our office as soon as possible. Our telephone number is (PHONE NUMBER.) We will send you a confirmation letter and a map to our office. In addition, we will give you a reminder call before the interview.

Thank you. We look forward to seeing you!

APPENDIX C

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUPS—STUDENTS

STUDENT DISCUSSION GUIDE

INTRODUCTION (10 minutes)
Moderator Introduction
Procedures
Respondents

- Family—siblings, ages, college experiences

COLLEGE SELECTION PROCESS (25 minutes)

- Primary fear or concerns as you start college
- What are you looking forward to?

Important criteria

- What criteria are you looking for, what's important
  - Programming
  - Experiences
  - Outcomes
- Anticipated major

Schools Considered/Applied to

- How many, which ones applied/considered
- Key sources of info
- How/why did you eliminate colleges
- Differences between those who made cut/didn't make cut
- Role of stated tuition in selection process (if not mentioned)

School Selected/Enrolled

- Which colleges made your short list (Why?)
- Which college did you select (Why? Why were others eliminated?)
- How make the decision/who else was involved in making the decision (visit, conversations, contact)
- What do you think you'll get from the college selected that you wouldn't get from your other options?
- Role of price in final selection process (if not mentioned)

(IF NOT MENTIONED, PROBE FOR THESE CHARACTERISTICS:)

- Perceived strength in desired major
- Location
- Size of campus
- Amenities on campus; quality of the dorms
- Brand name of college
- Perceptions of campus and community
- The campus visit
- Quality of faculty
- Class size
- Academic rigor
- Spiritual environment/worship opportunities
- Spiritual outreach opportunities; student mission possibilities
- Extracurricular opportunities
- Image of college/university

- Career preparation and placement success
- Internship opportunities
- Is it important whether a college is termed a "college" or a "university"?

ROLE OF TUITION/PRICE (15 minutes)

- How important is the stated price in your consideration process?
- How do you find out that stated price?
- Search process—look for schools within range/price parameters?
    - Role of tuition and preferred college
        - Preferred college came first—tried to work out a way to make it affordable without having to compromise
        - Accepted at several colleges—all pretty much the same—picked the best deal
- What price, if any, was established as the benchmark to compare other colleges?
    - How establish that price?
- For private college, is the stated price the amount you would have to pay to attend these (use examples)
- Parent contribution and involvement
- Discussion of family "plan" regarding payment for college

ROLE OF FINANCIAL AID/SCHOLARSHIPS (5 minutes)

- What does it cost to attend the college you are considering/selected?
    - How much are you paying? Who's paying the rest?
- Did you/do you plan to apply for aid
- Receiving any—what form, merit based vs. need based
    - Probe on scholarships
- Impact on decision

ADVENTIST INFLUENCE (30 minutes)

- What impact has being an Adventist had on your education so far?
- How about the impact on your college selection process?
- What have you heard about Adventist college education?
    - How did you hear about it
    - What's unique
    - What's compelling
    - Include both positive and less than positive perceptions (if any)
- For what reasons are you specifically interested in (or rejected) an Adventist college education?
    - Opportunities
    - Barriers
- Describe for me a "typical" Adventist college:
    - Culture/Campus life
    - Academics
    - Activities
    - Students
- How do Adventist colleges compare to...
    - Other private colleges
    - Public colleges or universities

AWARENESS

Mention each of the North American colleges and ask what they are known for. Check of awareness level.

POSITIONING (20 minutes)

- WRITTEN EXERCISE — List the top three reasons someone should consider attending an Adventist college

- Reaction to positioning statements
  - Initial reaction
    - Likes/dislikes
    - Appropriate
    - Unique
    - Compelling
  - After discussion of each:
    - Final sort — compelling vs. not compelling

COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES (10 minutes)

- How would you prefer to hear about a college?
- How would you like to get information about colleges you are interested in
- If college is interested in you, how would you prefer they communicate with you?
  - Media/Method (phone call, letter, e-mail, etc.)
  - Content/Message
  - Frequency

WRAP-UP (5 minutes)

APPENDIX D

MESSAGES AND POSITIONING STATEMENTS TESTED IN FOCUS GROUPS

POSITIONING STATEMENTS TESTED

At Adventist colleges you can develop lifelong friendships and relationships with students who share similar Christian beliefs and spiritual values.

Adventist colleges offer a supportive environment which "feels like family."

Adventist colleges prepare Christian leaders who will be able to work and witness in a global society.

Adventist colleges prepare you for life by enhancing your leadership and employment skills in a faith-based environment.

Adventist colleges provide a Christ-centered education with classes taught by Christian professors.

Adventist colleges can offer you spiritual growth and spiritual opportunities.

At Adventist colleges you have easy access to professors who understand the value of providing personal attention to each student.

Adventist colleges provide you with a private college education at a better price than most private colleges.

Adventist colleges provide a serene, welcoming environment with architecturally inspired campuses conducive to a learning environment.

Adventist colleges offer many activities to enhance your college experience—athletics, weekend events, outreach opportunities, etc.

APPENDIX E

SURVEY INSTRUMENT FOR NATIONWIDE TELEPHONE SURVEY

Strategic Resource Partners LLC
4165 Shoreline Drive #226
Spring Park, MN 55384
Tel. 952-471-0772
Fax: 952-471-0808

SDA Quantitative
Project #5019
August 2005

RISING FRESHMAN STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE v6

RISING FRESHMAN SAMPLE

n = 200 students

n = 100 parents (good mix of those whose child attended SDA academy and public high school/home-schooled) — separate questionnaire

FIELD NOTES:

- No Friday night (after 6pm) or Saturday calls, please.
- "Adventist" pronounced AD'ventist, with the emphasis on the first syllable, like AD'vertising.

QUOTAS FOR STUDENTS (200 complete):

Public high school (min. 75) 1

SDA academy (min. 75) 2

RESPONDENT NAME: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

INTERVIEWER: _____ DATE: _____

ASK TO SPEAK TO NAME ON LIST

Hello, I'm (NAME) with (INSERT COMPANY), a marketing research firm. Today we are doing a brief survey on behalf of the Seventh-day Adventist Church regarding college perceptions and would like to include your opinions. I assure you I am not trying to sell you anything, and the survey should take no longer than fifteen minutes. May I continue? (IF "NO," TERMINATE AND TALLY.)

1. Do you consider yourself a Seventh-day Adventist?
   Yes 1
   No ..... 2 → TERMINATE/TALLY

2. Are you planning on attending college as a freshman this fall? (RECORD BELOW.)
   Yes 1
   No ..... 2 → TERMINATE/TALLY
   REFUSED ..... X → TERMINATE/TALLY

3. What college are you planning to attend this fall? (DNRL. RECORD ONE MENTION ONLY.)
   Andrews University 1
   Atlantic Union College 2
   Canadian University College 3
   Columbia Union College 4
   Florida Hospital College 5
   Griggs University 6
   Kettering College of Medical Arts 7
   La Sierra University 8
   Loma Linda University 9
   Oakwood College 10
   Pacific Union College 11
   Southern Adventist University 12

Southwestern Adventist University 13

Union College 14

Walla Walla College 15

Other (SPECIFY)

_____

_____

_____

DON'T KNOW/RF ..... X → TERM AND TALLY

4. RECORD GENDER:

Male..... 1 ⇒ NO MORE THAN 60% MALE

Female ..... 2 ⇒ NO MORE THAN 60% FEMALE

5. Did you graduate from a...? (READ LIST. RECORD ONE MENTION ONLY)

Public high school..... 1 ⇒QUOTA: AT LEAST 75

Adventist academy high school..... 2 ⇒QUOTA: AT LEAST 75

Other private high school 3

Or, were you home schooled 4

DON'T KNOW/RF ..... X → TERM AND TALLY

6A. What was most important to you as you were trying to find a college that was right for you? (DO NOT READ LIST. RECORD ONE MENTION ONLY)

6B. What else was important to you? (DO NOT READ LIST. RECORD ALL MENTIONS)

	6A. MOST	6B. OTHER
Accredited college/university 1	1	1
Best financial aid package..... 2	2	2
Best program in my major 3	3	3

Campus environment 4 4

Can graduate in four years 5 5

Chance to find life mate 6 6

Close to home 7 7

Cost 8 8

Diversity 9 9

Family legacy/parents or siblings attended .....10..... 10

Friends attending school .....11..... 11

Good location .....12..... 12

Good quality education .....13..... 13

Graduation rate .....14..... 14

Must be SDA .....15..... 15

Not too close to home .....16..... 16

Opportunity to play sports .....17..... 17

Professors get to know you .....18..... 18

Reputation of college .....19..... 19

Right size .....20..... 20

Small class sizes .....21..... 21

Students share same spiritual beliefs/values ...22..... 22

Surrounding community .....23..... 23

Variety of activities offered on campus .....24..... 24

Worship opportunities .....25..... 25

Other (SPECIFY)

_____ .....( ) ..... ( )

_____ .....( ) ..... ( )

_____ .....( ) ..... ( )

Nothing 99

DON'T KNOW/RF ..... X X

7. What is your expected major, or area of study? (DO NOT READ LIST. RECORD ALL MENTIONS)

Business 1
Communication 2
Education 3
Engineering 4
Fine arts 5
Humanities 6
Journalism 7
Liberal arts (undecided) 8
Music 9
Nursing/allied health 10
Pharmacy 11
Physical sciences and math 12
Pre-law 13
Pre-medical 14
Pre-seminary studies 15
Religion 16
Social sciences 17
Vocational or technical trades 18
Undecided 19
Other (SPECIFY)
_____ ..... ( )
_____ ..... ( )
_____ ..... ( )

SELECTION PROCESS

8. To which college(s) did you complete an application to attend? PROBE: What others? (DO NOT READ LIST. RECORD ALL MENTIONS)

9. Which college was your first choice? (INCLUDE ONLY THOSE MENTIONED AT Q8. DO NOT READ LIST. RECORD ONE MENTION ONLY)

10. What is the main reason that college was your first choice? (CLARIFY)

11. And, which college was your second choice? (INCLUDE ONLY THOSE MENTIONED AT Q8, EXCLUDING THE COLLEGE MENTIONED AT Q9. DO NOT READ LIST. RECORD ONE MENTION ONLY)

	Q.8	Q.9	Q.11
Andrews University	1	1	1
Atlantic Union College	2	2	2

Canadian University College ..... 3 ..... 3 3

Columbia Union College ..... 4 ..... 4 4

Florida Hospital College ..... 5 ..... 5 5

Griggs University ..... 6 ..... 6 6

Kettering College of Medical Arts ..... 7 ..... 7 7

La Sierra University ..... 8 ..... 8 8

Loma Linda University ..... 9 ..... 9 9

Oakwood College ..... 10 ..... 10 10

Pacific Union College ..... 11 ..... 11 11

Southern Adventist University ..... 12 ..... 12 12

Southwestern Adventist University ..... 13 ..... 13 13

Union College ..... 14 ..... 14 14

Walla Walla College ..... 15 ..... 15 15

Other

_____ ( ) ..... ( ) ..... ( )

_____ ( ) ..... ( ) ..... ( )

_____ ( ) ..... ( ) .... ( )

DON'T KNOW/RF ..... X ..... X X

No second choice 99

IMPORTANT CRITERIA

12. Using the following scale, where three means very important and one means not important, please tell me how important each of the following were as you tried to select a college that was right for you.

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	DON'T KNOW
ROTATE:				
A. The college is small enough to make it easy to meet new people	3	2	1	X
B. Has smaller class sizes	3	2	1	X

C. Professors get to know you by name	3	2	1	X
D. It's located far enough from home so you feel independent	3	2	1	X
E. Classes are taught by professors rather than teaching assistants	3	2	1	X
F. The college is well-known by potential employers	3	2	1	X
G. It's located close enough to home for easy family visits	3	2	1	X
H. The college has a reputation for high quality education	3	2	1	X
I. The college has a diverse student population	3	2	1	X
J. The college offers academic scholarships to high-achieving students	3	2	1	X
K. The college helps you find the means to make it affordable to attend	3	2	1	X
L. Many of the students have the same beliefs and values that you do	3	2	1	X
M. The college provides opportunities for you to support your spiritual or religious needs	3	2	1	X
N. There are plenty of on-campus activities in which to participate	3	2	1	X

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

13. Please tell me the names of all the Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities of which you are aware. (DO NOT READ LIST. RECORD ALL MENTIONS) PROBE: What others?

14. Have you heard of...? (READ LIST OF THOSE NOT MENTIONED AT Q14. RECORD ALL MENTIONS)

	Q13	Q14	
		Yes	No
Andrews University	1	1	2
Atlantic Union College	2	1	2

Canadian University College	3	1	2
Columbia Union College	4	1	2
Florida Hospital College	5	1	2
Griggs University	6	1	2
Kettering College of Medical Arts	7	1	2
La Sierra University	8	1	2
Loma Linda University	9	1	2
Oakwood College	10	1	2
Pacific Union College	11	1	2
Southern Adventist University	12	1	2
Southwestern Adventist University	13	1	2
Union College	14	1	2
Walla Walla College	15	1	2

Other (SPECIFY)

_____( )

_____( )

_____( )

DON'T KNOW/RF X

NONE ..... 99 ⇒ASK Q14

IF "NONE" AT Q13 AND "NO" TO ALL AT Q14, SKIP TO Q16.

15. How did you first become aware of these colleges or universities? (DO NOT READ LIST. RECORD ALL MENTIONS)

16A. What would have been the best way for you to find out about some of these SDA colleges and universities? (DO NOT READ LIST. RECORD ONE ANSWER)

16B. IF NOT MENTIONED ASK: Would it have been effective for you to hear about Adventist colleges or universities from...? (READ LIST)

ROTATE:		15 First Aware	16A Best	16B Effective Yes	16B Effective No
A. Church pastor	.....	1	1	1	2

B. Church events 2	2	1	2
C. Church newsletter.....3	3	1	2
D. College fairs at high school.....4	4	1	2
E. From parents 5	5	1	2
F. From high school counselors 6	6	1	2
G. From college recruiters.....7	7	1	2
H. From mailings sent to you by the colleges.....8	8	1	2
I. From email sent to you by the colleges 9	9	1	2

J. Other (SPECIFY)

_____ ( ) ( )
_____ ( ) ( )
_____ ( ) ( )

ASK Q17A IF ONLY MENTIONED "OTHER" AT Q8, OTHERWISE SKIP TO Q17B
INSTRUCTIONS

17A. I notice that you did not apply to any Adventist colleges or universities. What is the main reason that you did not apply to any Adventist colleges or universities? (CLARIFY)

ASK Q17B IF MENTIONED PUNCH 1-15 AT Q8 AND "OTHER" AT Q3, OTHERWISE SKIP TO Q18

17B. I notice that you applied to an Adventist college or university, but are not attending one. What is the main reason you decided **not** to attend an Adventist college or university? (CLARIFY)

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

18. Using the following scale where three means describes very well and one means does not describe, please rate your perception of Seventh-day Adventist colleges on the same attributes you rated earlier.

ROTATE:	Describes Very Well	Describes Somewhat	Does Not Describe	DON'T KNOW
A. The colleges are small enough to make it easy to meet new people 3	2	1	X	
B. Have smaller class sizes 3	2	1	X	
C. Professors get to know you by name.....3	2	1	X	
D. They're located far enough from home so you feel independent.....3	2	1	X	

E. Classes are taught by professors rather than teaching assistants	3	2	1	X
F. The colleges are well-known by potential employers	3	2	1	X
G. They're located close enough to home for easy family visits	3	2	1	X
H. The colleges have a reputation for high quality education	3	2	1	X
I. The colleges have a diverse student population	3	2	1	X
J. The colleges offer academic scholarships to high-achieving students	3	2	1	X
K. The colleges help you find the means to make it affordable to attend	3	2	1	X
L. Many of the students have the same beliefs and values that you do	3	2	1	X
M. The colleges provide opportunities for you to support your spiritual or religious needs	3	2	1	X
N. There are plenty of on-campus activities in which to participate	3	2	1	X

19. Next, I'm going to read you some statements about Adventist colleges. For each one, please tell me if it makes you more interested, less interested, or doesn't change your level of interest in attending an Adventist college or university.

		More Interested	No change in interest	Less Interested	DON'T KNOW
ROTATE:					
A. Adventist colleges can offer you spiritual growth and spiritual opportunities that you simply can't find elsewhere.	3	2	1	X	
B. Adventist colleges provide you with a private college education at a better price than most private colleges.	3	2	1	X	
C. Adventist colleges provide a Christ-centered education with classes taught by Christian professors.	3	2	1	X	

D. At Adventist colleges you have easy access to professors who understand the value of providing personal attention to each student.	3	2	1	X
E. At Adventist colleges you can develop lifelong friendships and relationships with students who share similar Christian beliefs and spiritual values.	3	2	1	X
F. Adventist colleges offer a supportive environment which "feels like family."	3	2	1	X
G. Adventist colleges offer many activities to enhance your college experience — athletics, weekend events, outreach opportunities, etc.	3	2	1	X
H. Adventist colleges prepare Christian leaders who will be able to work and witness in a global society.	3	2	1	X

TUITION

20. Which, if any, of the following types of financial aid did you receive?

ROTATE:	Yes	No	DON'T KNOW/ REFUSED
A. Financial need-based grant from the college	1	2	X
B. Financial need-based grant from the state	1	2	X
C. Academic merit scholarship or grants from the college	1	2	X
D. Talent scholarship or grant from the college	1	2	X
E. Federal Pell grant	1	2	X
F. An outside scholarship from a community or service organization	1	2	X
G. An outside scholarship from church	1	2	X
H. Tuition subsidy because of parent's denominational employment (employed by the church)	1	2	X

And finally, just a few questions for classification purposes.

21. How many times in the past **three months** would you say you've had the opportunity to attend church services? (BEST ESTIMATE)

_____

DON'T KNOW/RF X

22. Does your family observe the Sabbath? (DO NOT READ LIST)

Yes 1

No 2

Sometimes 3

DON'T KNOW/RF X

23. What was the highest level of education received for each of your parents? (DO NOT READ LIST. RECORD ONE MENTION ONLY FOR EACH)

	Father	Mother
Grade school or less	1	1
Some high school	2	2
High school graduate	3	3
Vocational/Technical school	4	4
Some college	5	5
College graduate	6	6
Some post graduate	7	7
Post graduate degree	8	8
DON'T KNOW	X	X

ASK Q.24 IF ATTENDED COLLEGE

24. What undergraduate college was attended by your...? (DO NOT READ LIST. SELECT ALL MENTIONS)

	Father	Mother
Andrews University	1	1
Atlantic Union College	2	2
Canadian University College	3	3
Columbia Union College	4	4
Florida Hospital College	5	5
Griggs University	6	6
Kettering College of Medical Arts	7	7
La Sierra University	8	9
Loma Linda University	9	9
Oakwood College	10	10

Pacific Union College .....11.....11

Southern Adventist University.....12.....12

Southwestern Adventist University .....13.....13

Union College.....14.....14

Walla Walla College .....15.....15

Other (SPECIFY)

_____... ( ) ..... ( )

_____... ( ) ..... ( )

_____... ( ) ..... ( )

DON'T KNOW..... X X

25. Are you the first child in your family to attend college?

Yes..... 1
No 2

26. Were you recruited by an SDA college?

Yes..... 1
No 2

27. Are your parents married?

Yes..... 1 ⇒ ASK Q28
No ..... 2 ⇒ ASK Q28A

28. Which of the following best describes your parent's total annual household income, before taxes? (READ LIST. RECORD ONE MENTION ONLY)

Less than $25,000 1
$25,000-$49,999 2
$50,000-$74,999 3
$75,000-$99,999 4
$100,000-$149,999..... 5
More than $150,000..... 6
DON'T KNOW X

29. To make sure we have included the opinions of all races and ethnic groups, please tell me which of the following best describes you. (READ LIST. RECORD ONE MENTION ONLY)

Caucasian/White 1
Asian 2
African American 3
Hispanic..... 4
Native American 5
Other (SPECIFY):
_____... ( )
REFUSED X

Thank you for taking time to participate in this survey.

APPENDIX F

PERMISSION LETTERS

AACU
Association of Adventist Colleges & Universities

North American Division Office of Education
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring MD, 20904

August 21, 2006

Vinita Sauder
5125 Silver Lane
Apison, TN 37302

Dear Vinita:

You have permission from the Adventist Association of Colleges and Universities to use the database of survey research collected from SDA high school graduates for your dissertation work.

I wish you well on your project.

Sincerely,

Gordon Bietz
Chairman
AACU

jrm

From: Kevin Menk
Sent: Monday, April 25, 2005 9:31 AM
To: Vinita Sauder; Jim Hardwick-day
Subject: RE: My dissertation -- your feedback?

Vinita,

Congratulations. I have no issues with the use of the research to support your dissertation. I look forward to our conference call to discuss the planning meeting agenda (I believe Jim is coordinating a time).

Kevin Menk
Strategic Resource Partners
Planning. Marketing. Research.
"It's what we know."

-----Original Message-----
From: Vinita Sauder
Sent: Sunday, April 24, 2005 6:16 PM
To: Kevin Menk; Jim Hardwick-day
Subject: My dissertation -- your feedback?

Kevin and Jim:

After 3 1/2 long years, I have finished my classwork for my doctorate in Educational Administration/Leadership (from Andrews University) and am working with my committee chair on the topic for my dissertation. I was telling Dr. Loretta Johns about my work as chair of the Joint Marketing Committee for AEA and AACU, and she suggested that I use this upcoming research project as a base for my dissertation.

But to avoid any ethical conflicts, I wanted to ask you two what you thought about her idea? I don't want to jeopardize the whole project in any way by my having any ulterior motives. I would want this project to go by all the standard protocols, according to our contract.

I will be clearing this idea through the AACU executive committee, too, to make sure there are no hesitations anywhere. I certainly don't want it to look like I talked the presidents into some expensive research so that I could do my dissertation!

Let me know what your thoughts are on this . . . .

Thank you,

Vinita Sauder
Vice President for Marketing & Enrollment Services
Southern Adventist University
P.O. Box 370/4881 Taylor Circle
Collegedale, Tennessee 37315

1.800.SOUTHERN
www.southern.edu
Power for Mind and Soul

REFERENCE LIST

REFERENCE LIST

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